



US011073786B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Itabashi et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 11,073,786 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Jul. 27, 2021**

(54) **DEVELOPING CARTRIDGE**

(56) **References Cited**

(71) Applicant: **BROTHER KOGYO KABUSHIKI**
KAISHA, Nagoya (JP)

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

(72) Inventors: **Nao Itabashi**, Nagoya (JP); **Junichi**
Yokoi, Nagoya (JP)

5,878,309 A 3/1999 Nomura
6,128,452 A 10/2000 Miyabe
(Continued)

(73) Assignee: **BROTHER KOGYO KABUSHIKI**
KAISHA, Nagoya (JP)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

CN 1081350 C 3/2002
CN 1428668 A 7/2003
(Continued)

This patent is subject to a terminal dis-
claimer.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Sep. 5, 2017—(EP) Office Communication—App 16185121.7.
(Continued)

(21) Appl. No.: **17/015,185**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 9, 2020**

Primary Examiner — Sevan A Aydin

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Merchant & Gould P.C.

US 2020/0401075 A1 Dec. 24, 2020

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 16/272,095, filed on
Feb. 11, 2019, now Pat. No. 10,782,644, which is a
(Continued)

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Dec. 25, 2015 (JP) 2015-254202

(51) **Int. Cl.**

G03G 15/08 (2006.01)

G03G 21/16 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **G03G 21/1652** (2013.01); **G03G 15/0863**
(2013.01); **G03G 15/0875** (2013.01); **G03G**
2221/1684 (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC G03G 21/1652; G03G 15/80; G03G
21/1867; G03G 2221/166

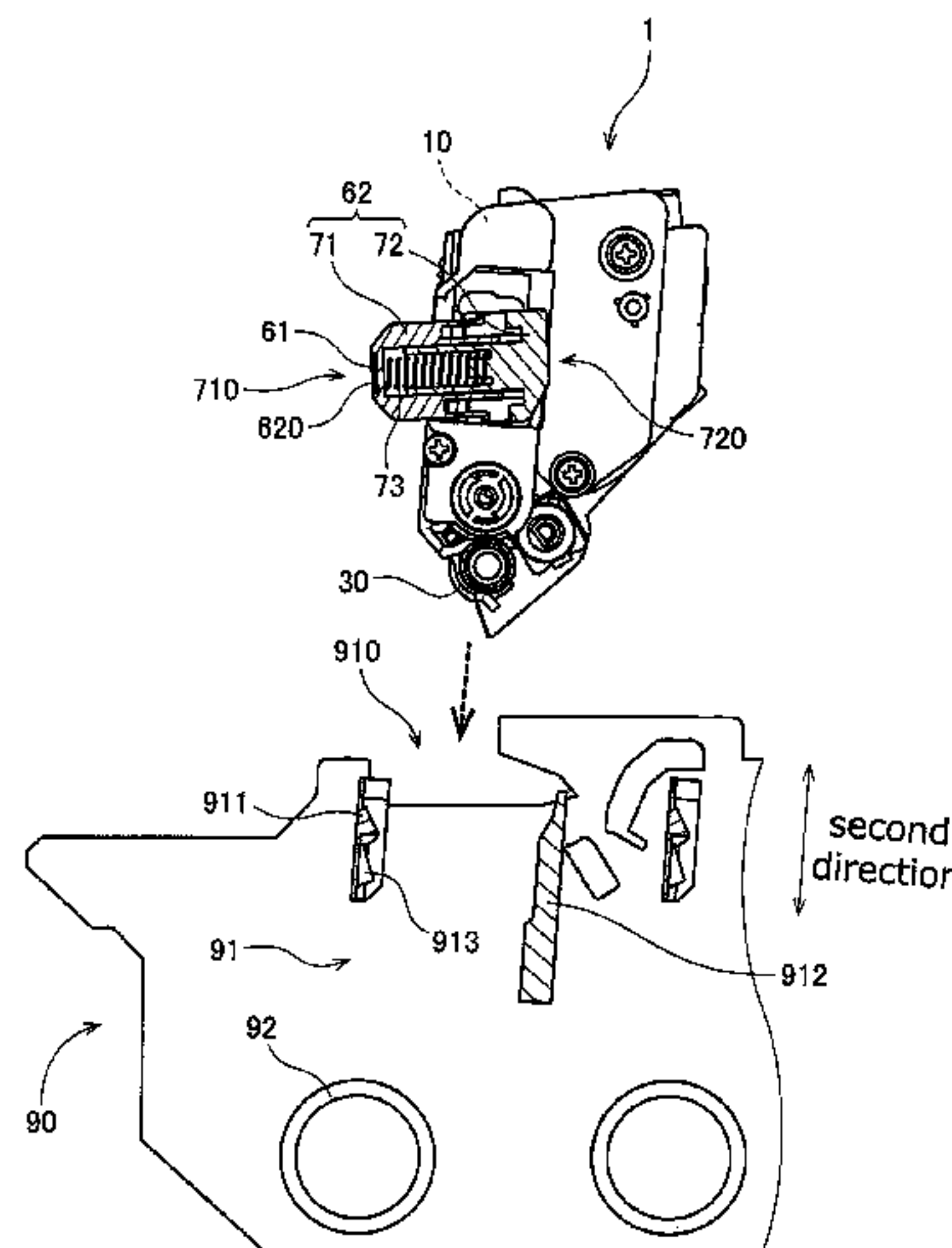
See application file for complete search history.

(57)

ABSTRACT

A developing cartridge may include: a casing to accommo-
date developer; a storage medium including an electric
contact surface; an elastic member extending in a first
direction crossing the electric contact surface, and config-
ured to be compressed or stretched in the first direction
between a first state and a second state; and a holder
including an outer surface positioned toward a side of the
holder in the first direction, the electric contact surface
positioned at the outer surface, and movable between first
and second positions in the first direction relative to the
casing. A length of the elastic member in the first direction
is greater in the first state than in the second state. The
electric contact surface is in the first position when the
elastic member is in the first state, and the electric contact
surface is in the second position when the elastic member is
in the second state.

21 Claims, 35 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

continuation of application No. 16/030,985, filed on Jul. 10, 2018, now Pat. No. 10,203,651, which is a continuation of application No. 15/280,679, filed on Sep. 29, 2016, now Pat. No. 10,031,472.

JP	2011059510	A	3/2011
JP	2011-118119	A	6/2011
JP	2012-234190	A	11/2012
JP	2013054058	A	3/2013
JP	2015-108802	A	6/2015
JP	2016-118625	A	6/2016

(56)

References Cited**U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

6,934,485	B2	8/2005	Miyabe
8,503,907	B2	8/2013	Ji
2003/0170042	A1	9/2003	Okamoto et al.
2006/0159483	A1	7/2006	Yokoi
2007/0077083	A1	4/2007	Yokoi
2008/0212996	A1	9/2008	Yokoi
2010/0054796	A1	3/2010	Nakamura
2011/0064457	A1	3/2011	Okabe et al.
2011/0129252	A1	6/2011	Oda et al.
2012/0200871	A1	8/2012	Takahashi et al.
2013/0051849	A1	2/2013	Itabashi et al.
2013/0183058	A1	7/2013	Won
2014/0099143	A1	4/2014	Oda et al.
2014/0205314	A1	7/2014	Chang
2014/0212151	A1	7/2014	Oda
2014/0341602	A1	11/2014	Takahashi et al.
2015/0037059	A1	2/2015	Yang et al.
2015/0037060	A1	2/2015	Hamaya
2015/0118890	A1	4/2015	Oshikawa
2015/0212482	A1	7/2015	Wakimoto
2015/0261177	A1	9/2015	Moon et al.
2017/0003645	A1	1/2017	Kawakami
2017/0184998	A1	6/2017	Itabashi

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

CN	103645621	A	3/2014
JP	9-43925	A	2/1997
JP	9-43927	A	2/1997
JP	2003243104	A	8/2003
JP	2003-257522	A	9/2003
JP	2003-330335	A	11/2003
JP	2004-61596	A	2/2004
JP	2008-185971	A	8/2008
JP	2008242085	A	10/2008
JP	2008-276138	A	11/2008
JP	2010-79262	A	4/2010
JP	2010-107679	A	5/2010

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Sep. 6, 2017—(EP) Extended Search Report—App 17172620.1.
 Extended European Search Report issued in related European Patent Application No. 18166158.8, dated Aug. 7, 2018.
 Office Action issued in related European Patent Application No. 17 172 620.1, dated Aug. 6, 2018.
 Office Action issued in related European Patent Application No. 18166158.8, dated Feb. 28, 2019.
 International Search Report and Written Opinion issued in related International Patent Application No. PCT/JP2016/075015, dated Nov. 22, 2016.
 International Preliminary Report on Patentability issued in related International Patent Application No. PCT/JP2016/075015, dated Jul. 5, 2018.
 Office Action issued in related Australian Patent Application No. 2016376403, dated Jan. 7, 2019.
 Office Action issued in related Canadian Patent Application No. 3,009,594, dated Apr. 30, 2019.
 First Examination Report issued in related New Zealand Patent Application No. 743912, dated Nov. 6, 2018.
 Office Action (Notification of Reason for Refusal) issued in related Korean Patent Application No. 10-2018-7021298, dated May 27, 2019.
 Office Action issued in corresponding Canadian Patent Application No. 3,009,594, dated Apr. 28, 2020.
 Extended European Search Report issued in corresponding European Patent Application No. 20151506.1, dated May 6, 2020.
 Extended European Search Report issued in corresponding European Patent Application No. 20151527.7, dated May 13, 2020.
 Notification of First Office Action issued in corresponding Chinese Patent Application No. 201611175969.8, dated May 28, 2020.
 Office Action issued in corresponding European Patent Application No. 20 151 506.1, dated Jul. 23, 2020.
 Office Action issued in corresponding European patent application No. 20151506.1, dated Jan. 27, 2021.
 Office Action issued in related Japanese Patent Application No. 2019-169641, dated Dec. 22, 2020.
 Notification of Second Office Action issued in corresponding Chinese Patent Application No. 201611175969.8, dated Oct. 23, 2020.

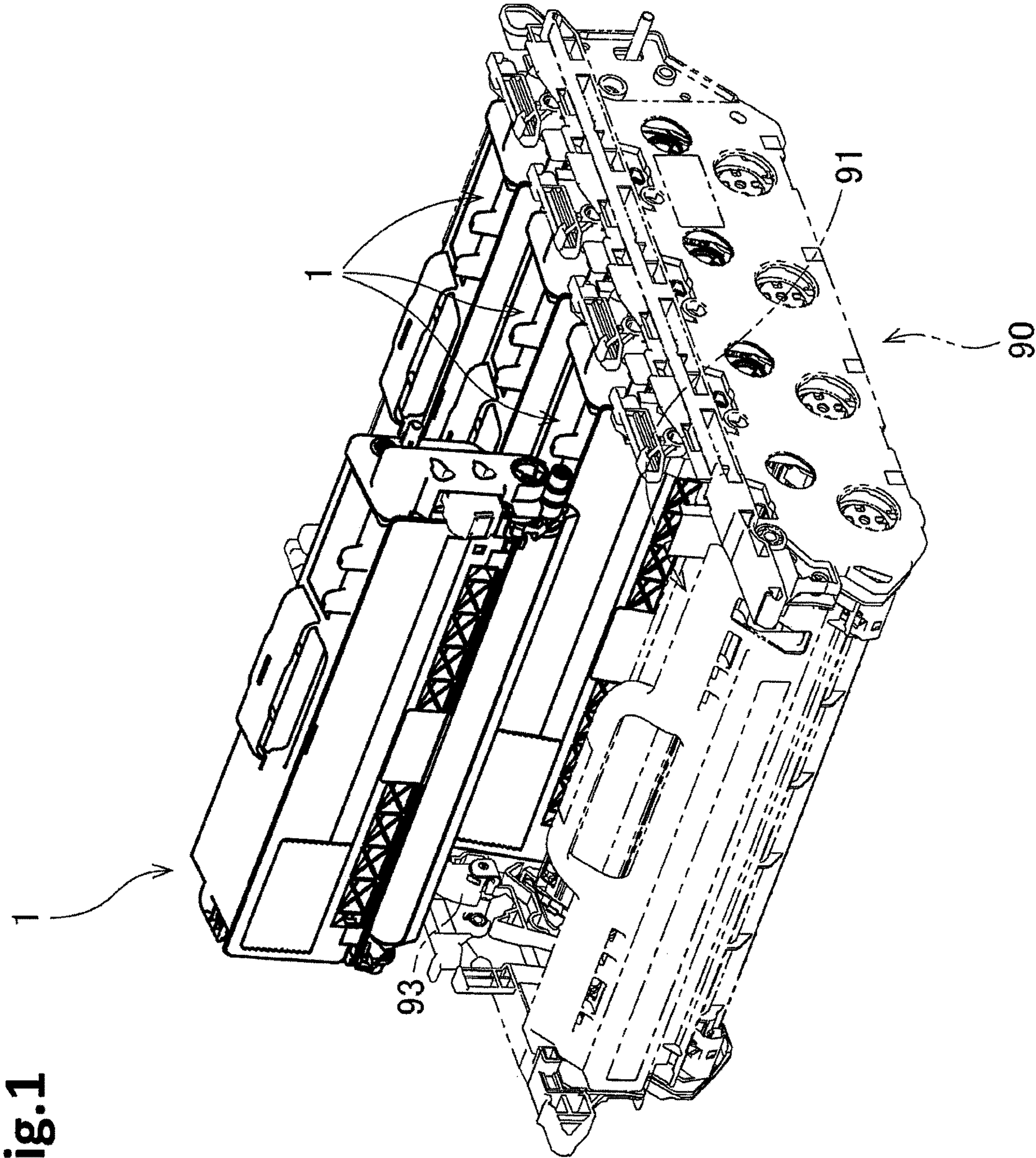
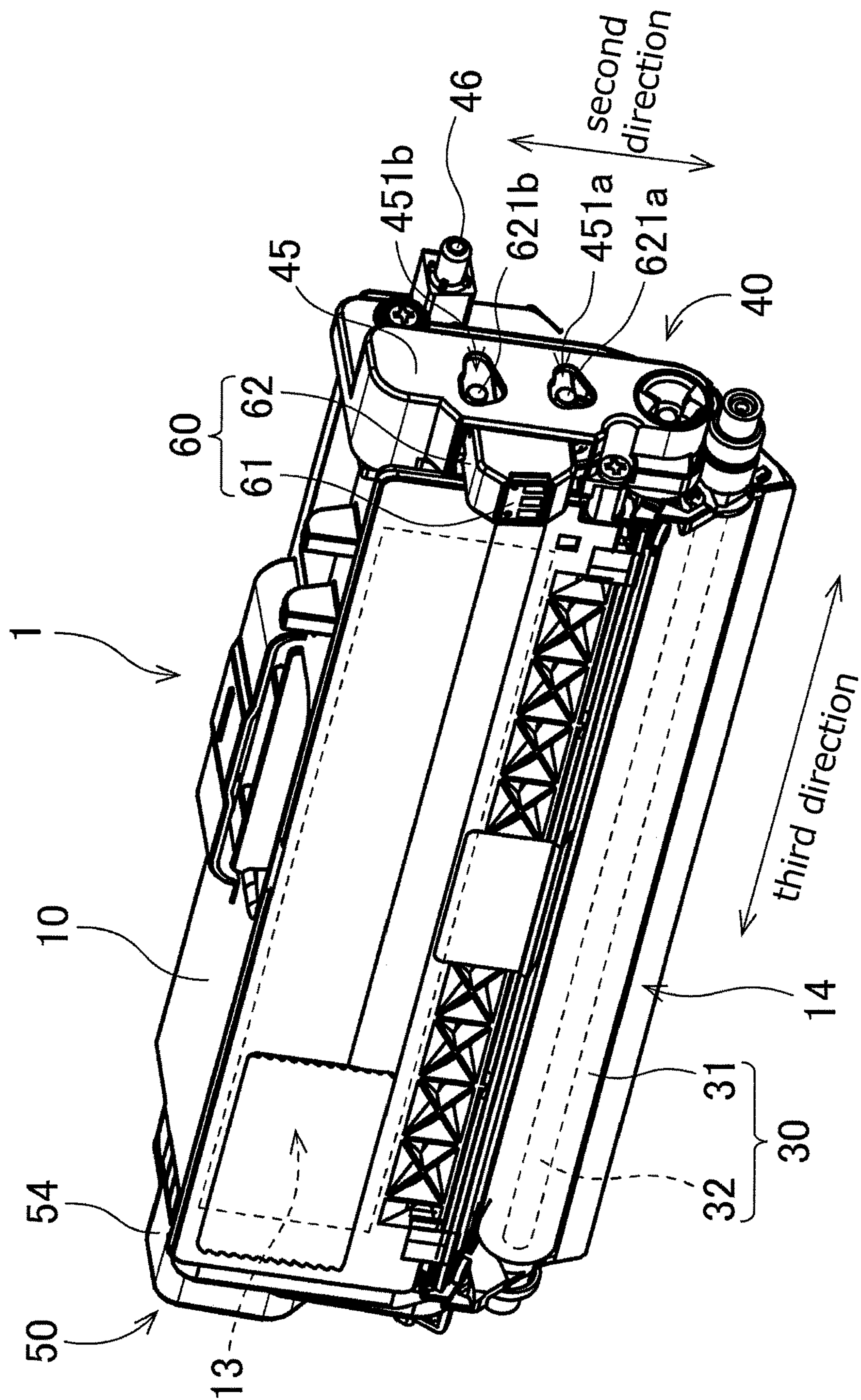
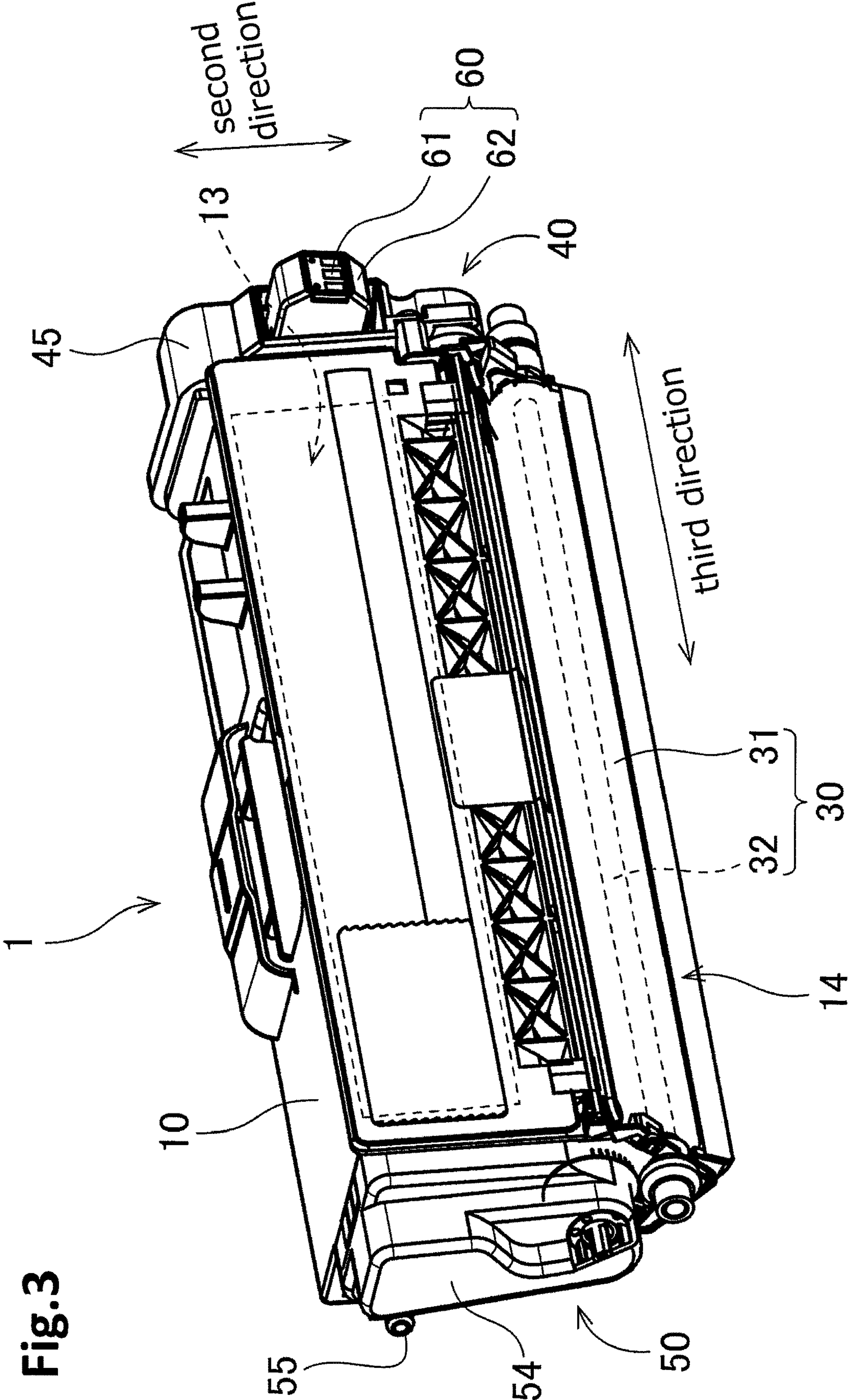
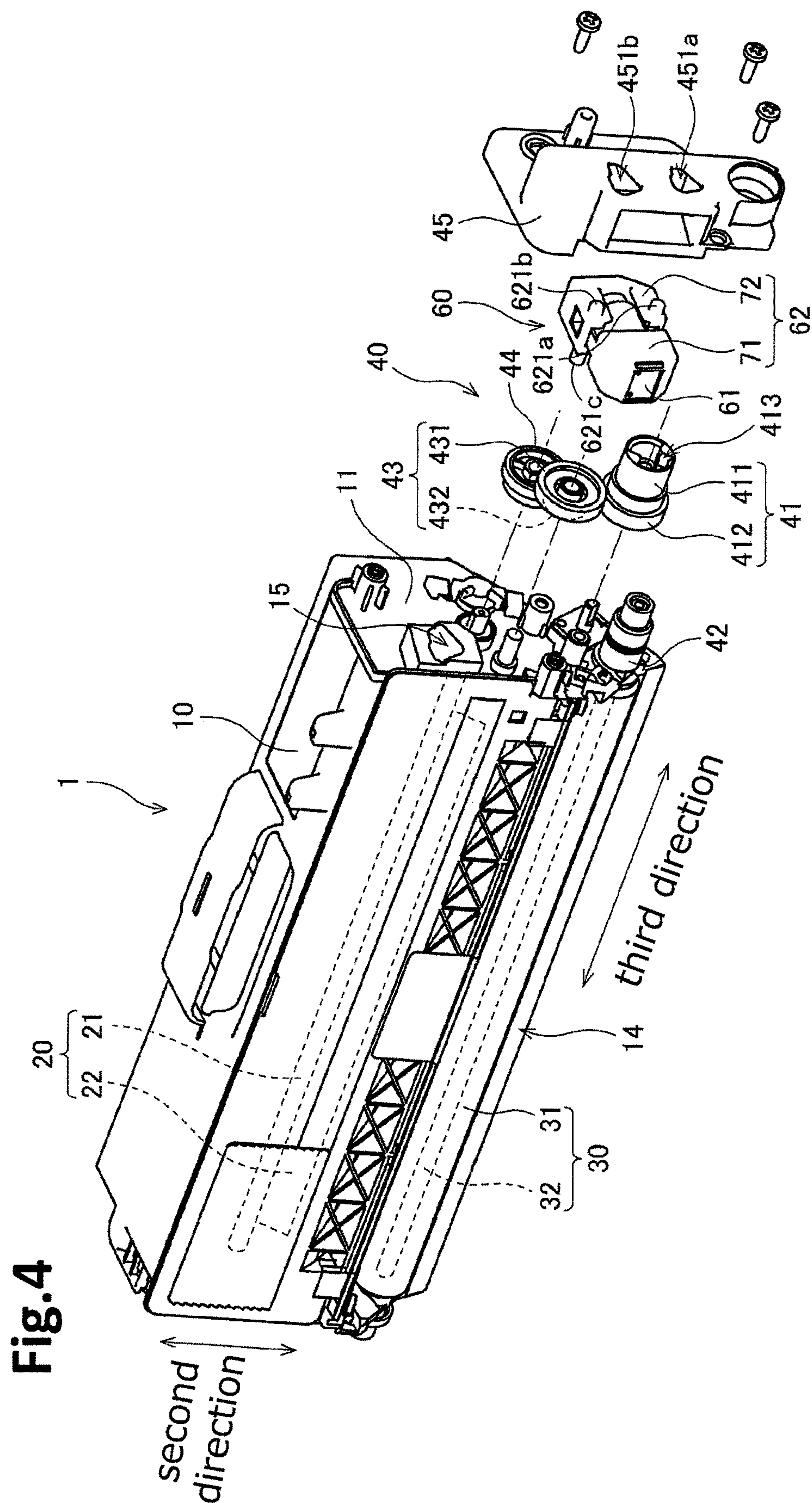


Fig.1

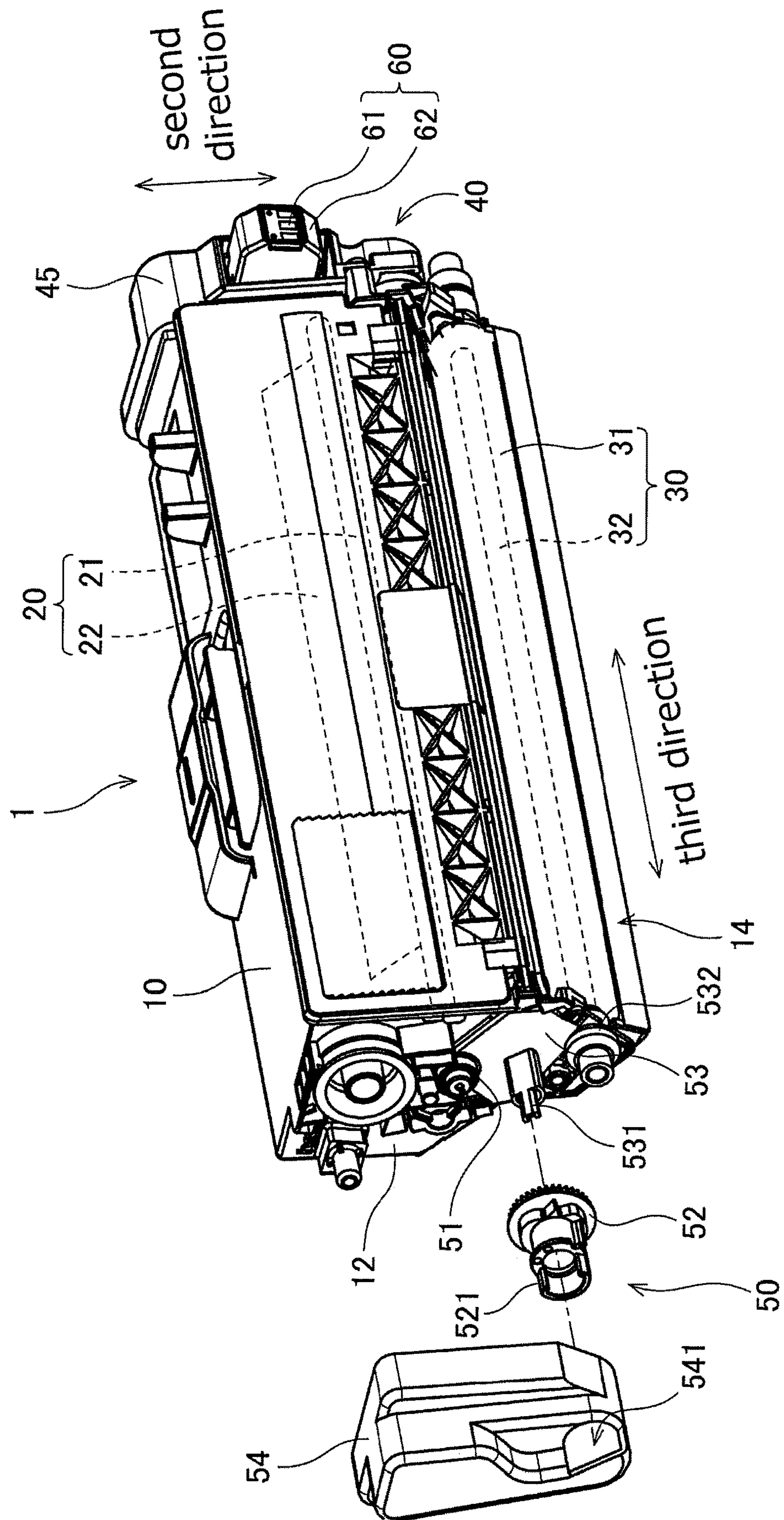
Fi. 2







Fi.5



6. **مؤلف**

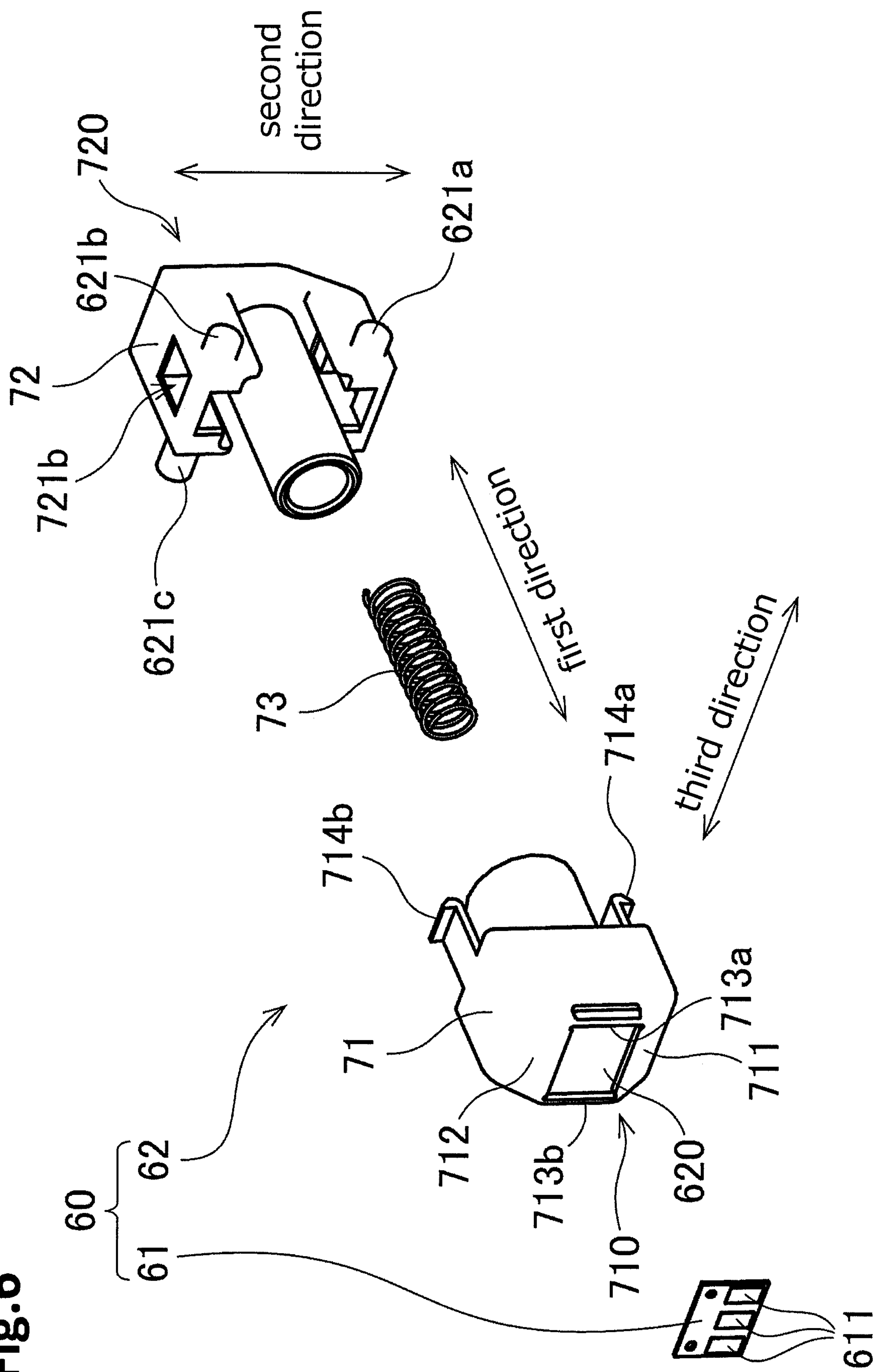


Fig. 7

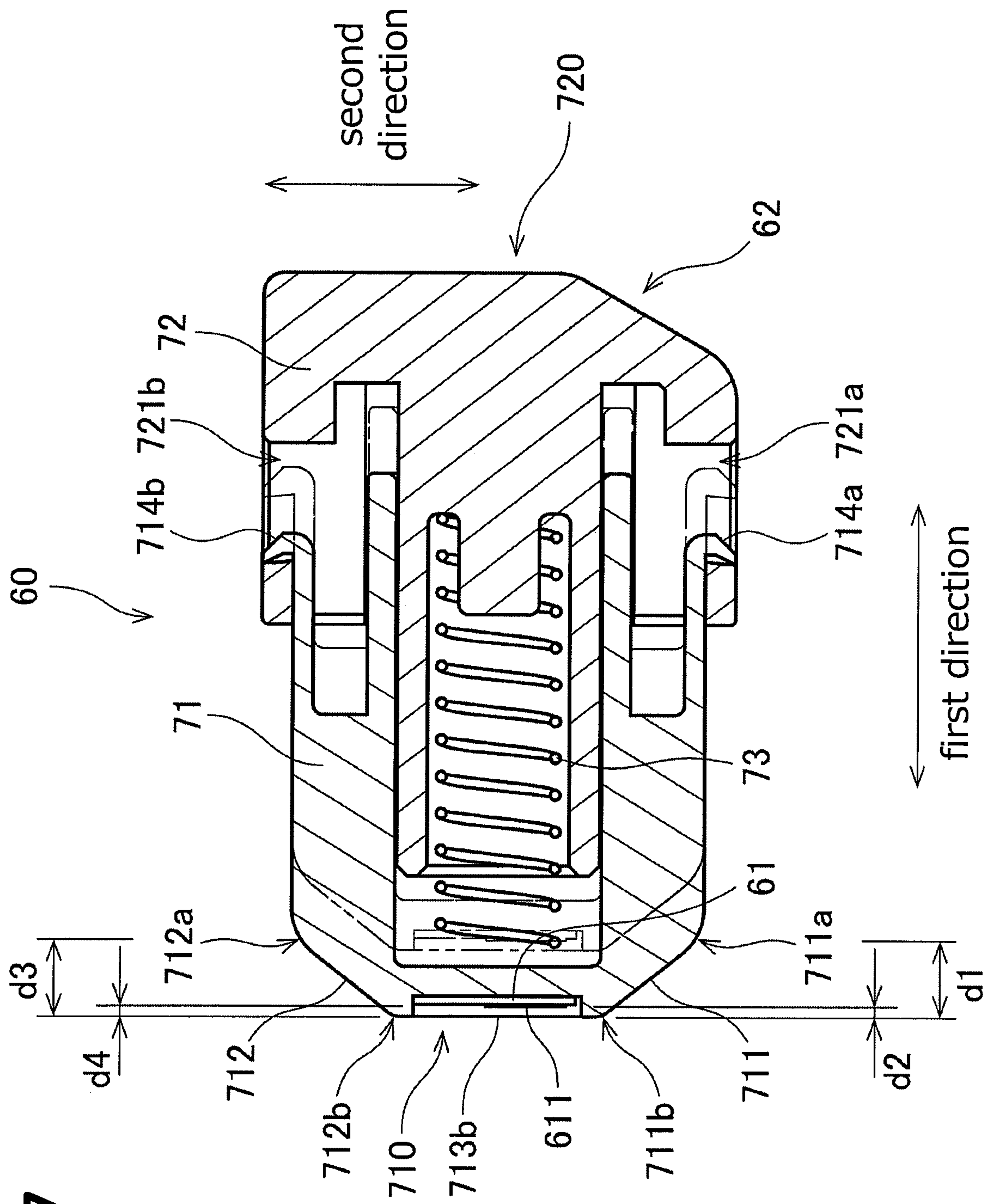
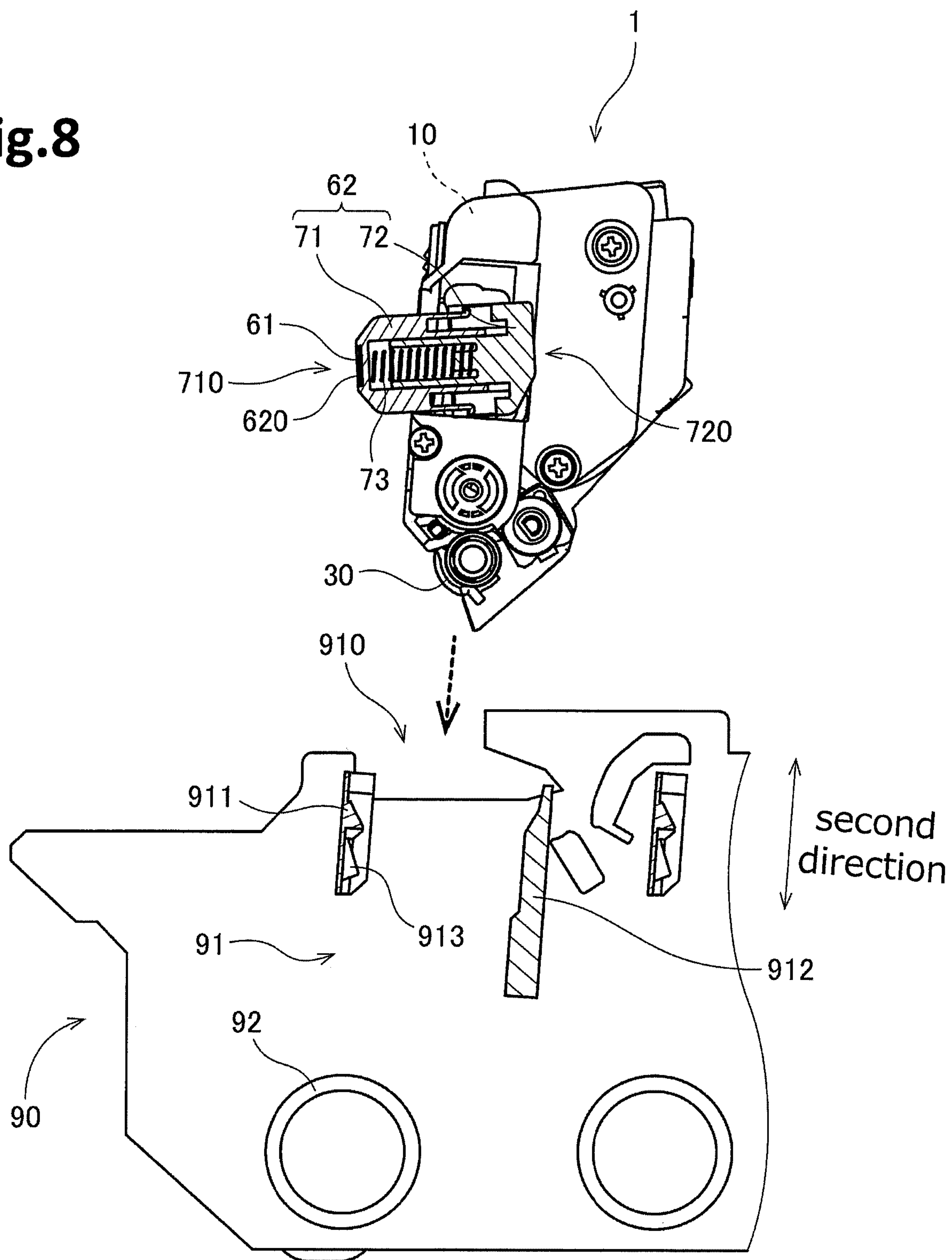


Fig.8



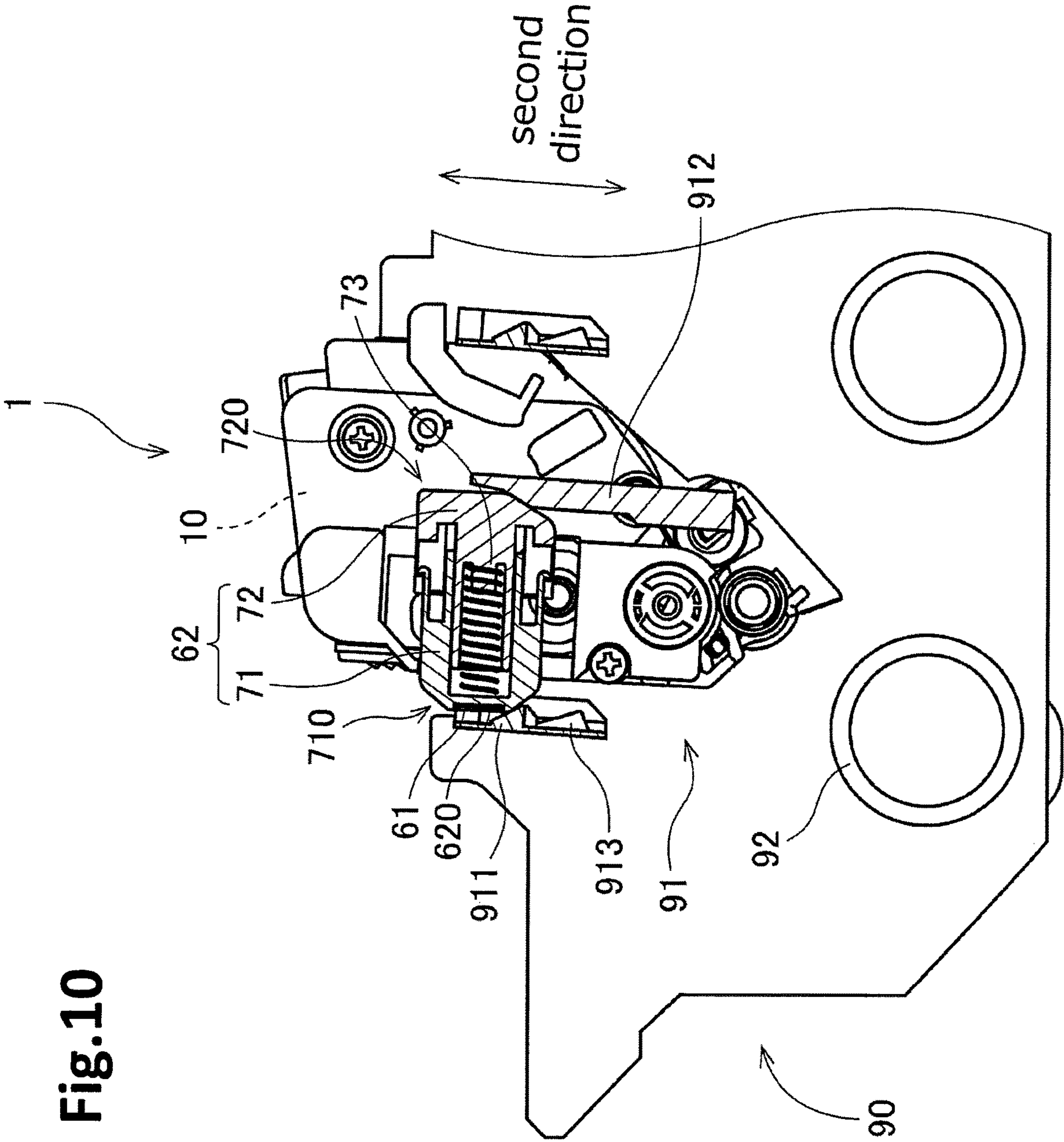


Fig.11

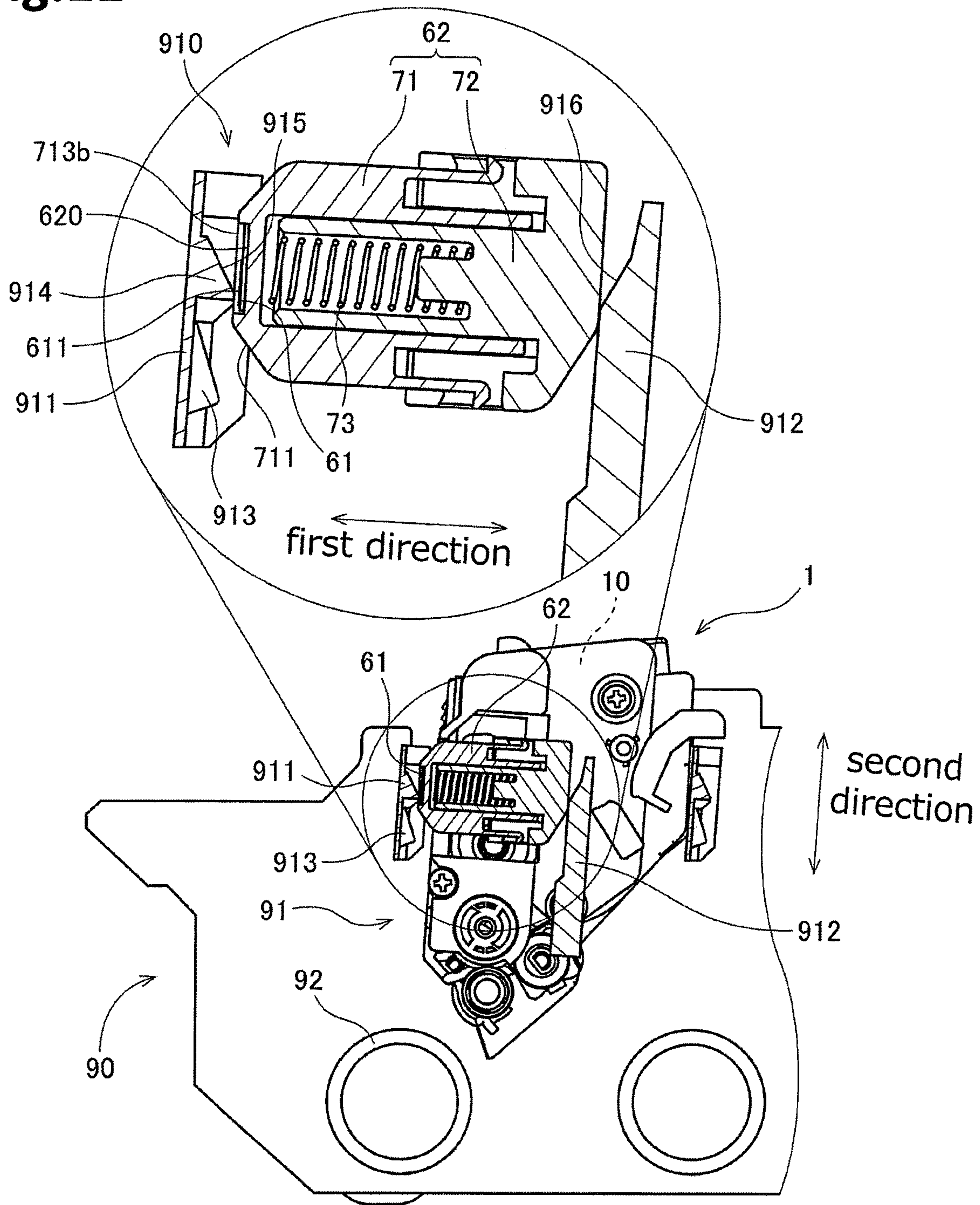


Fig.12

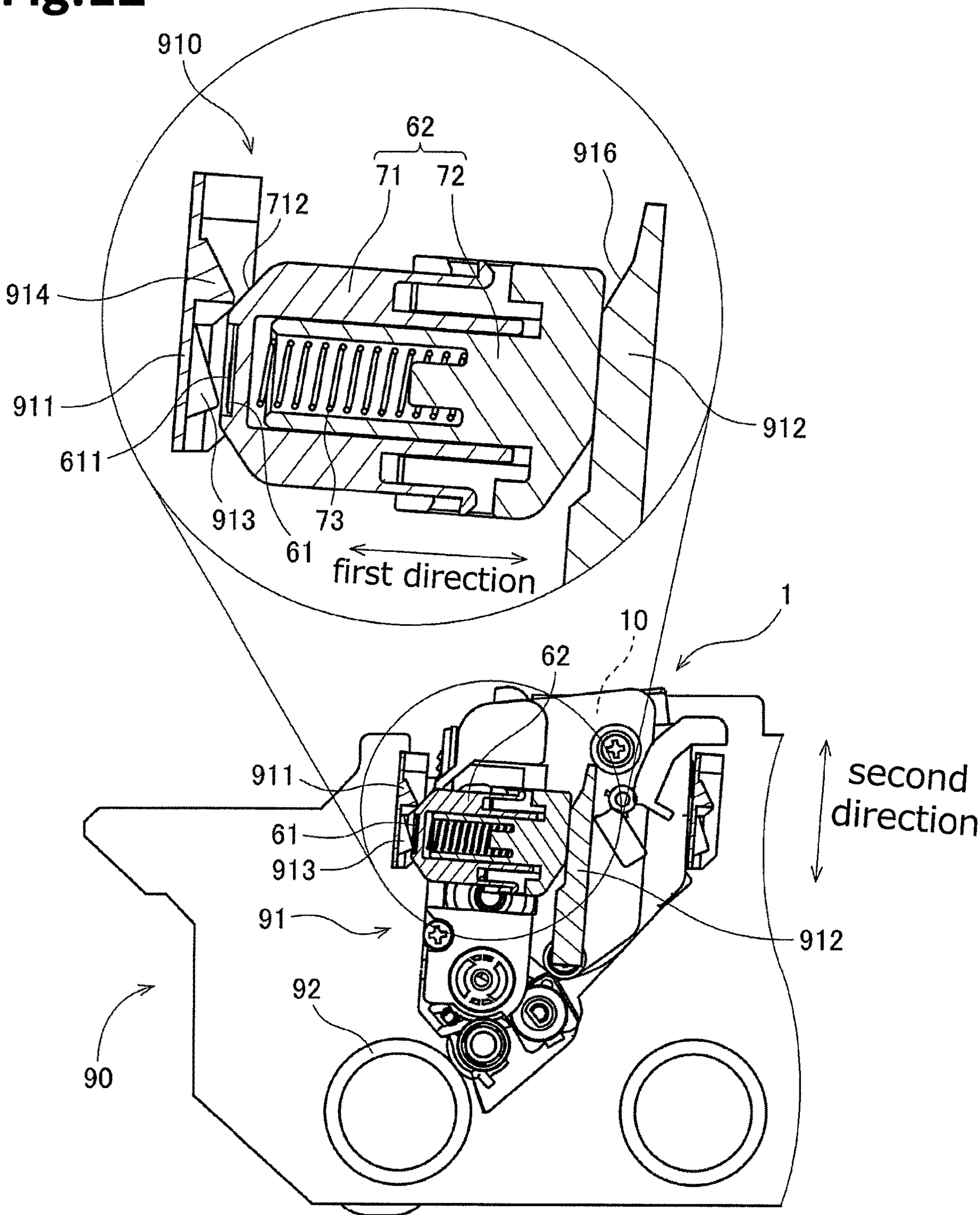
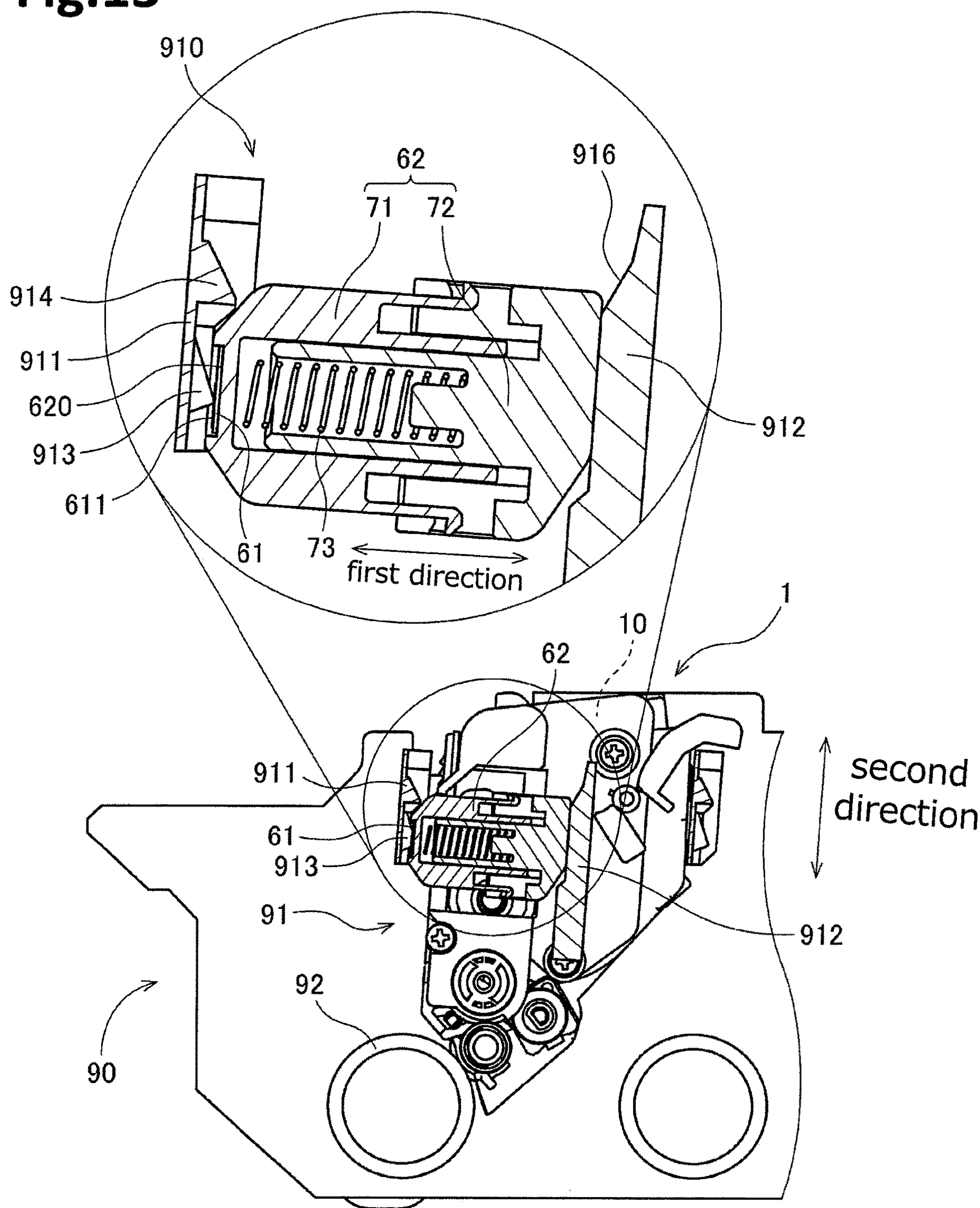


Fig.13



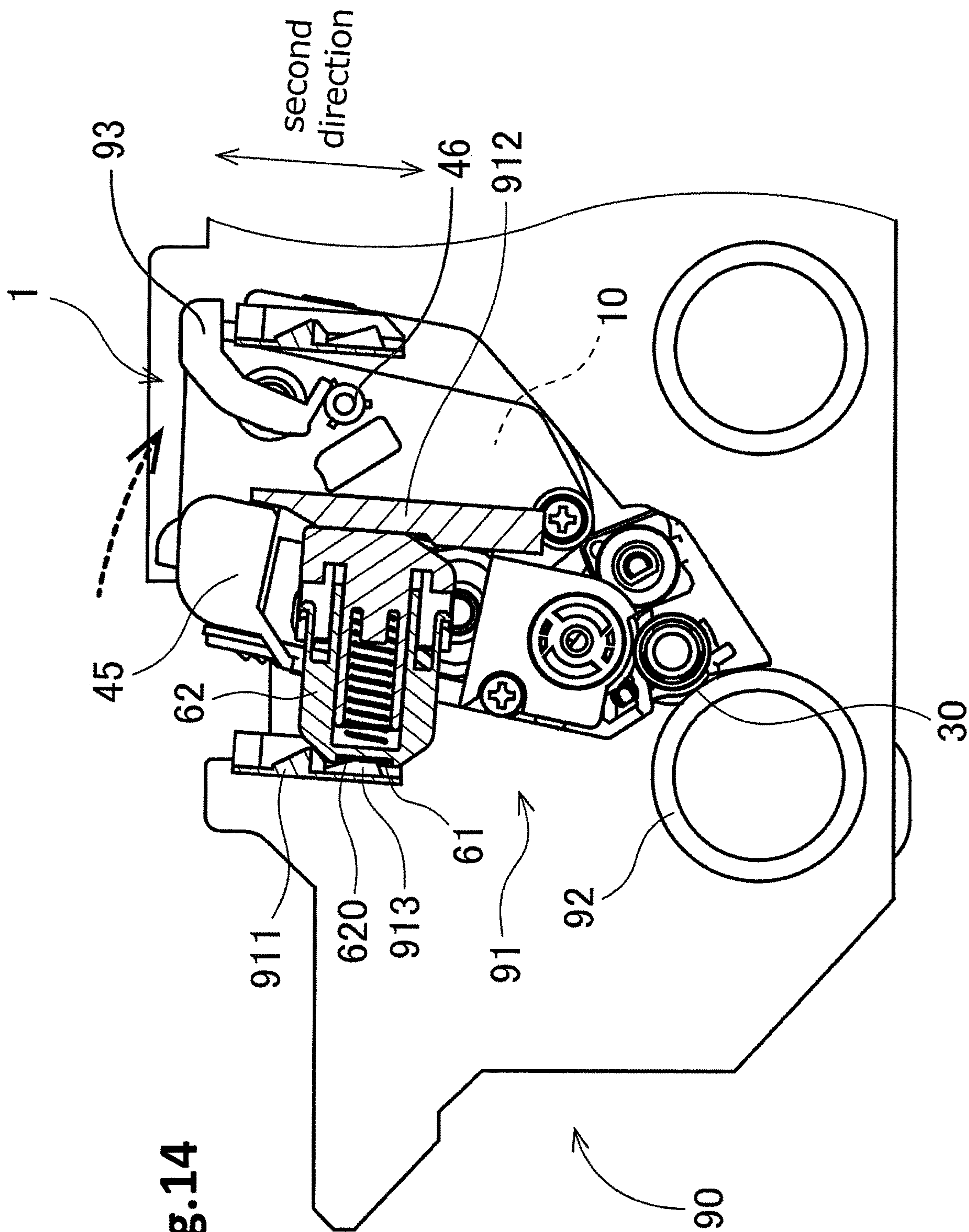


Fig. 14

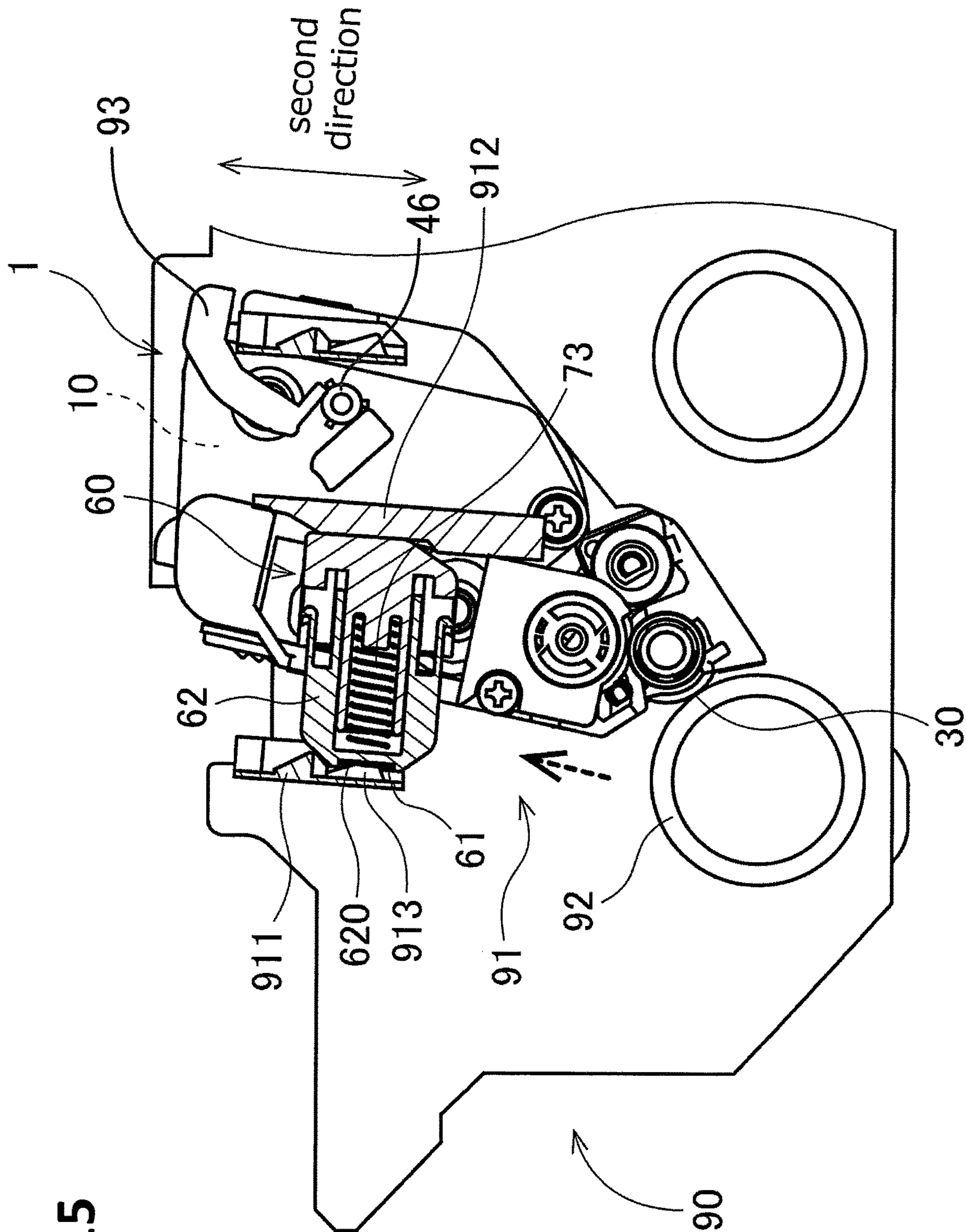


Fig.15

Fig.16

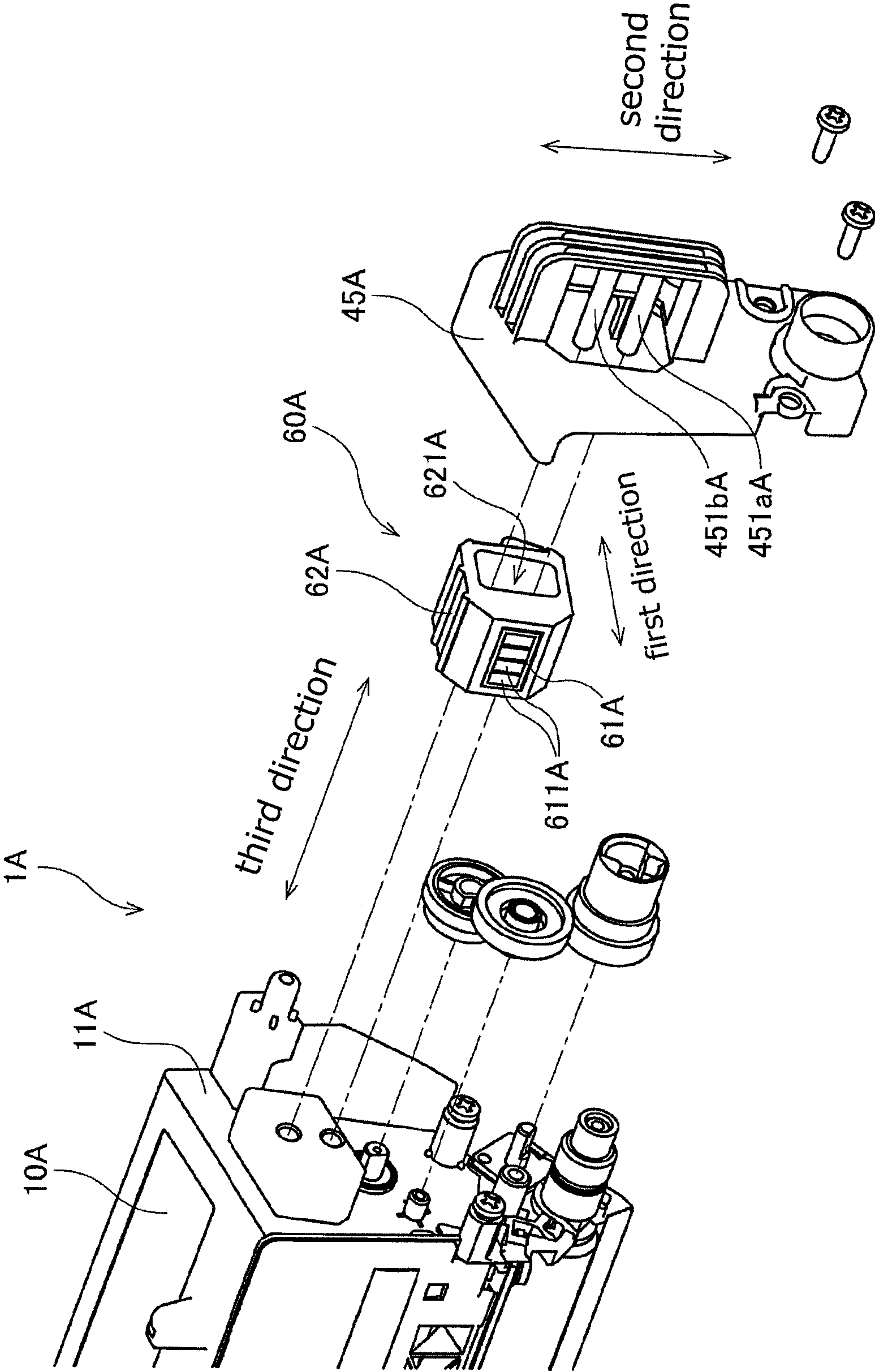
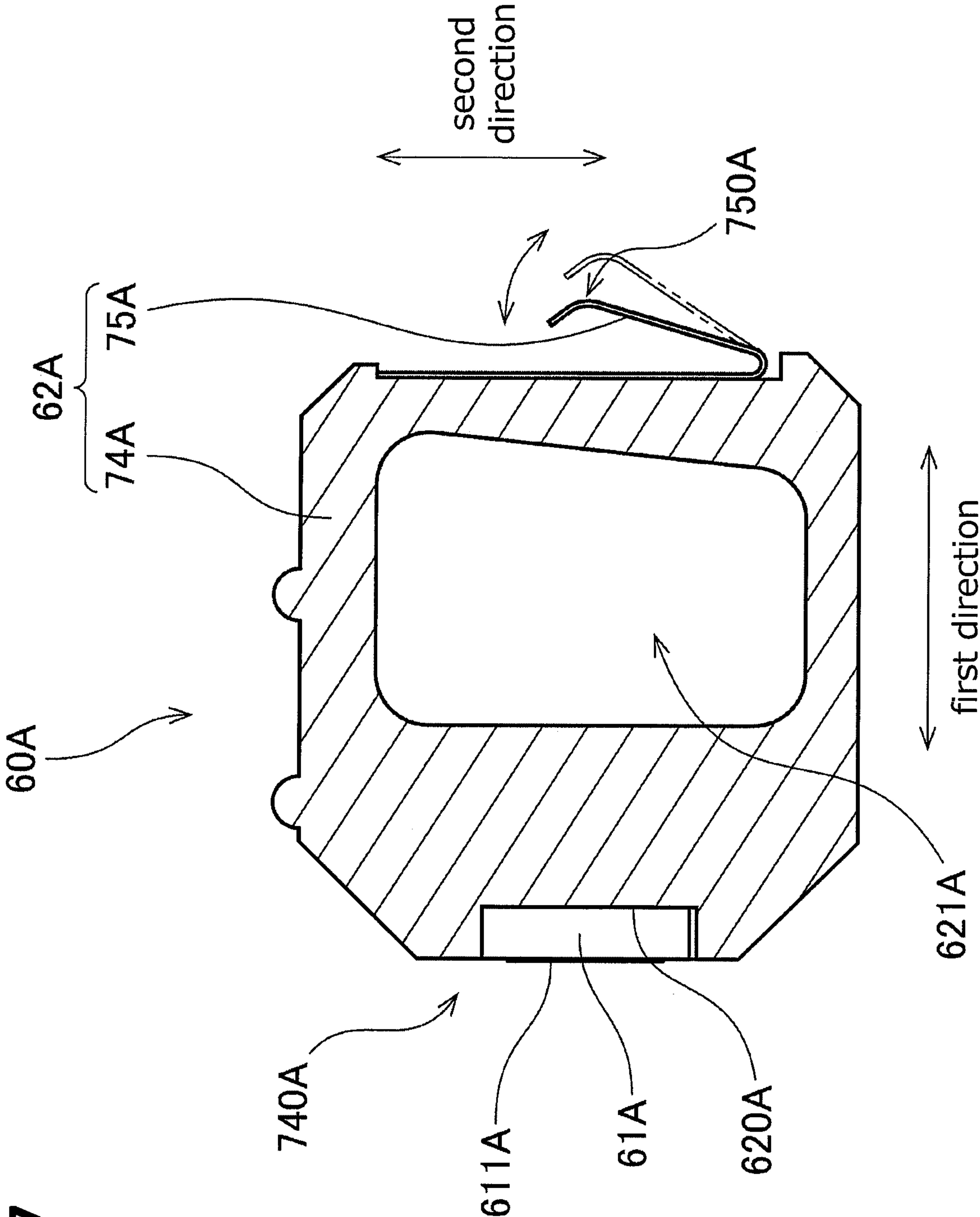


Fig.17



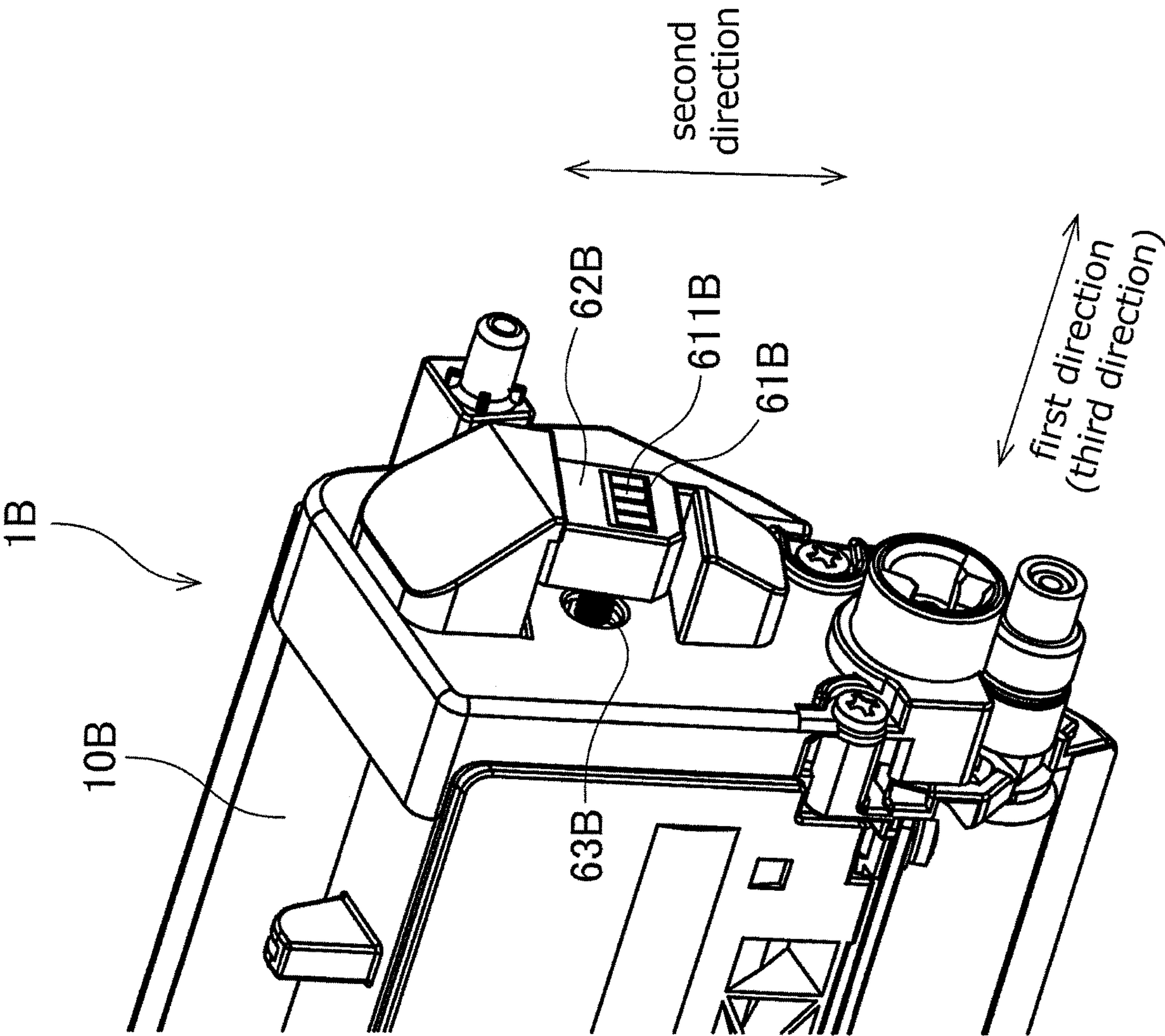


Fig.18

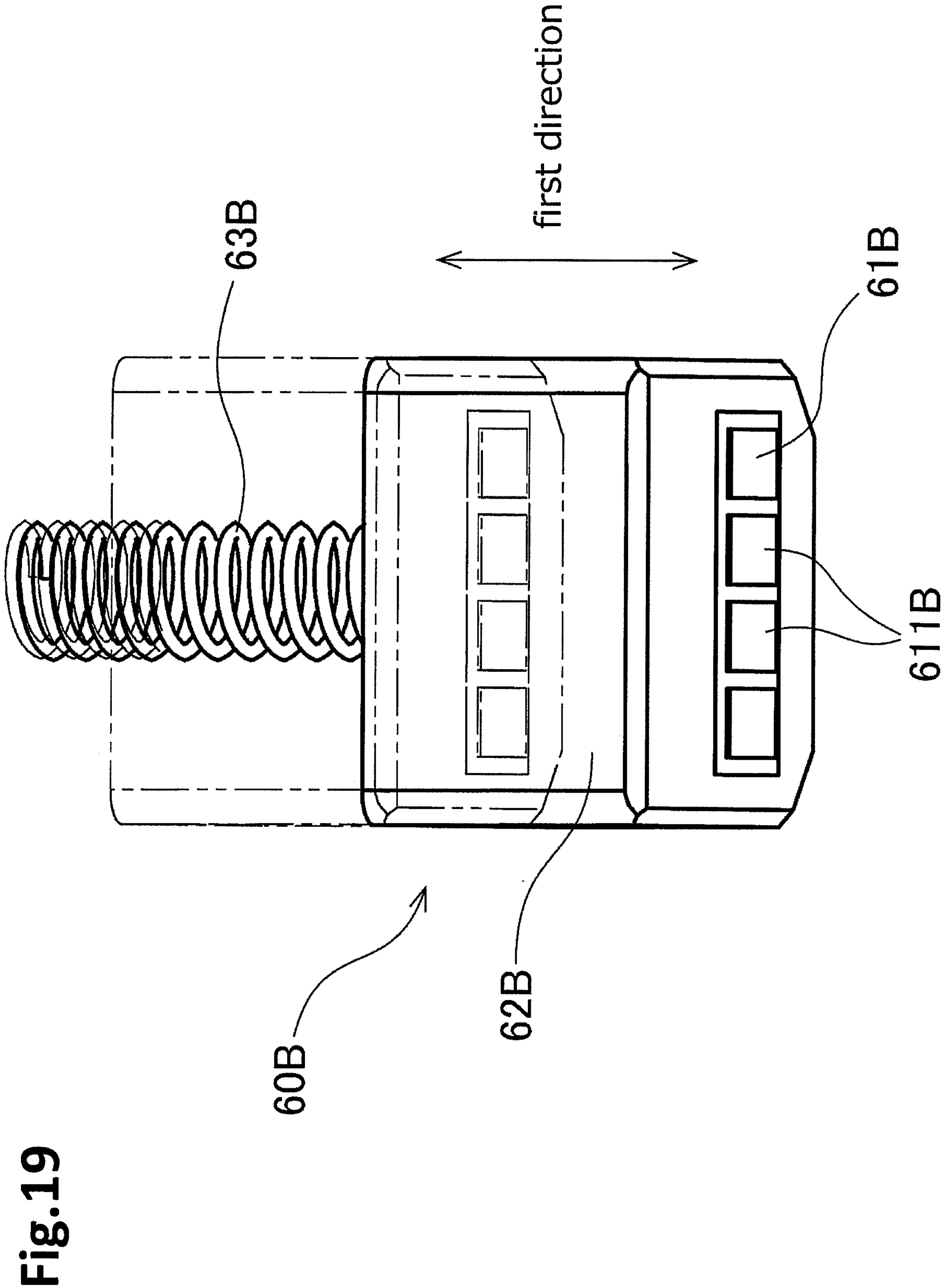


Fig. 20

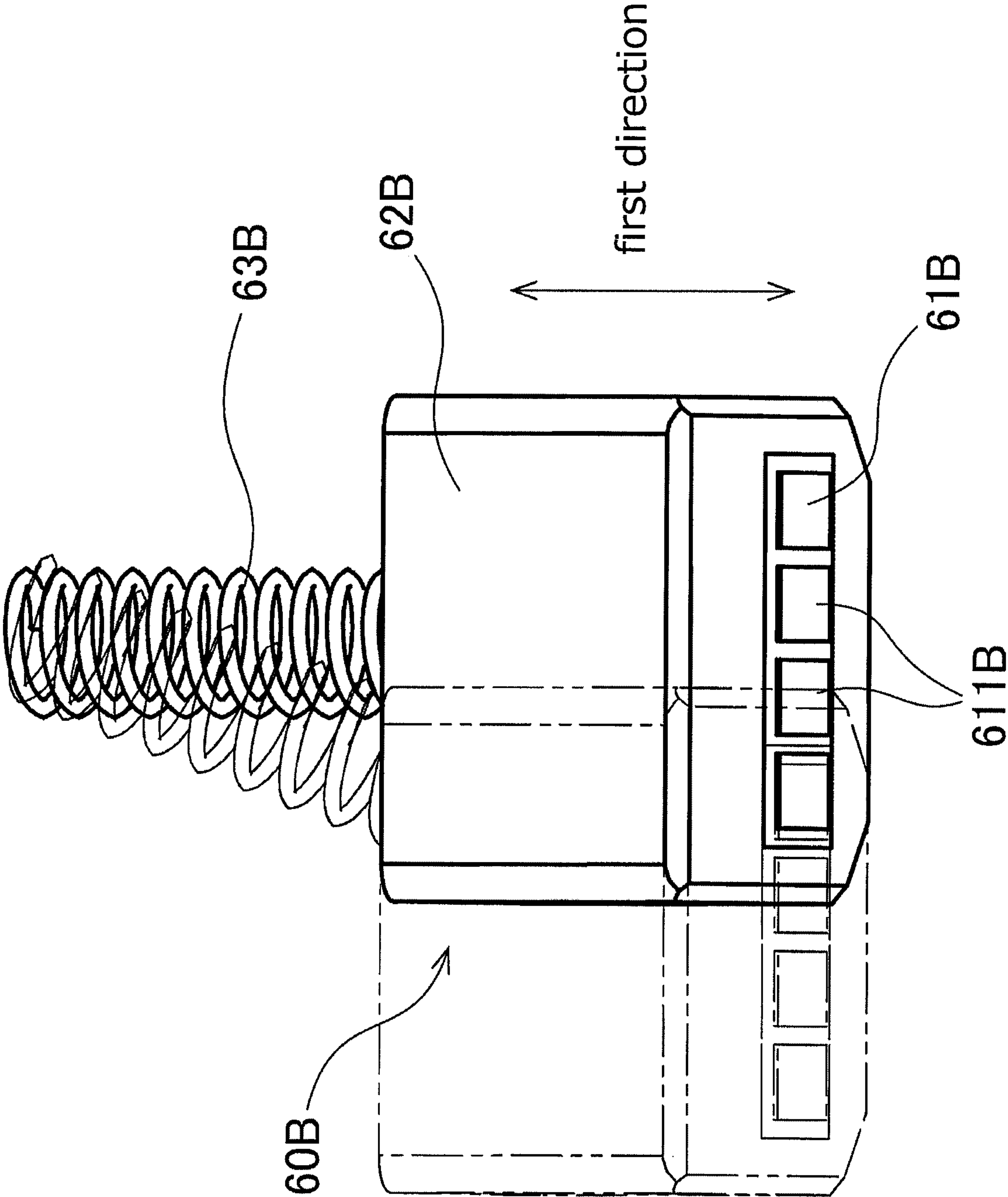


Fig.21

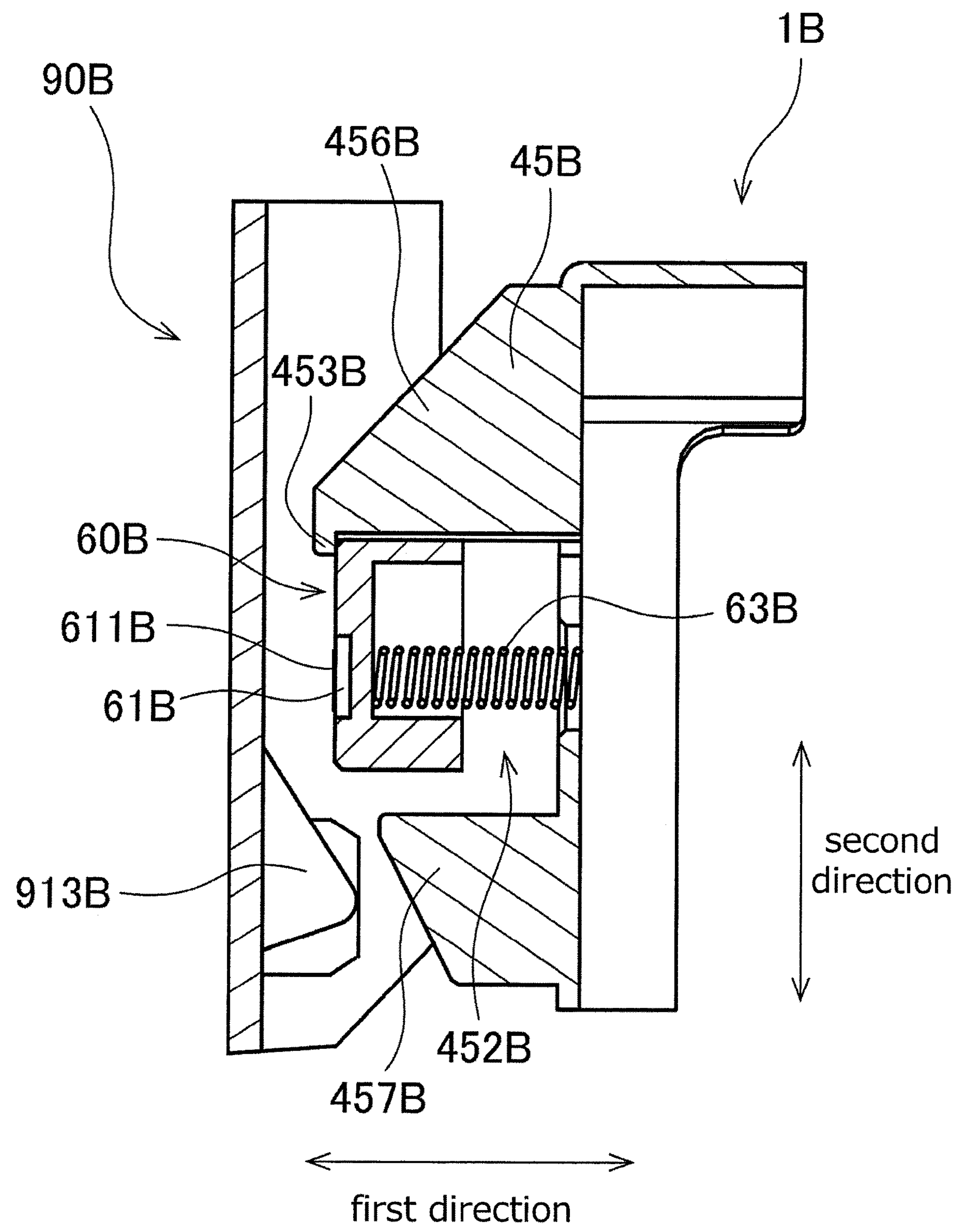


Fig.22

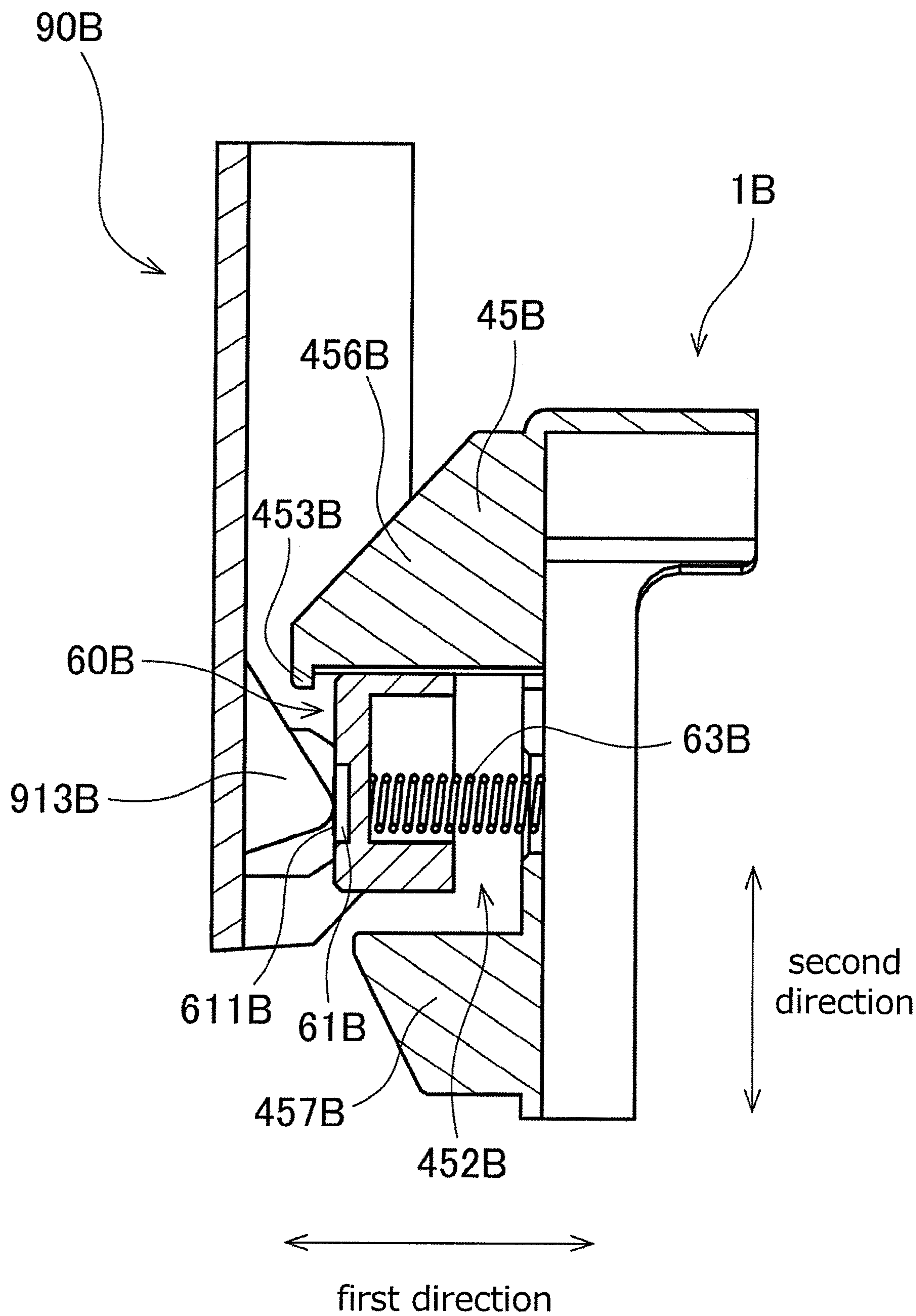


Fig.23

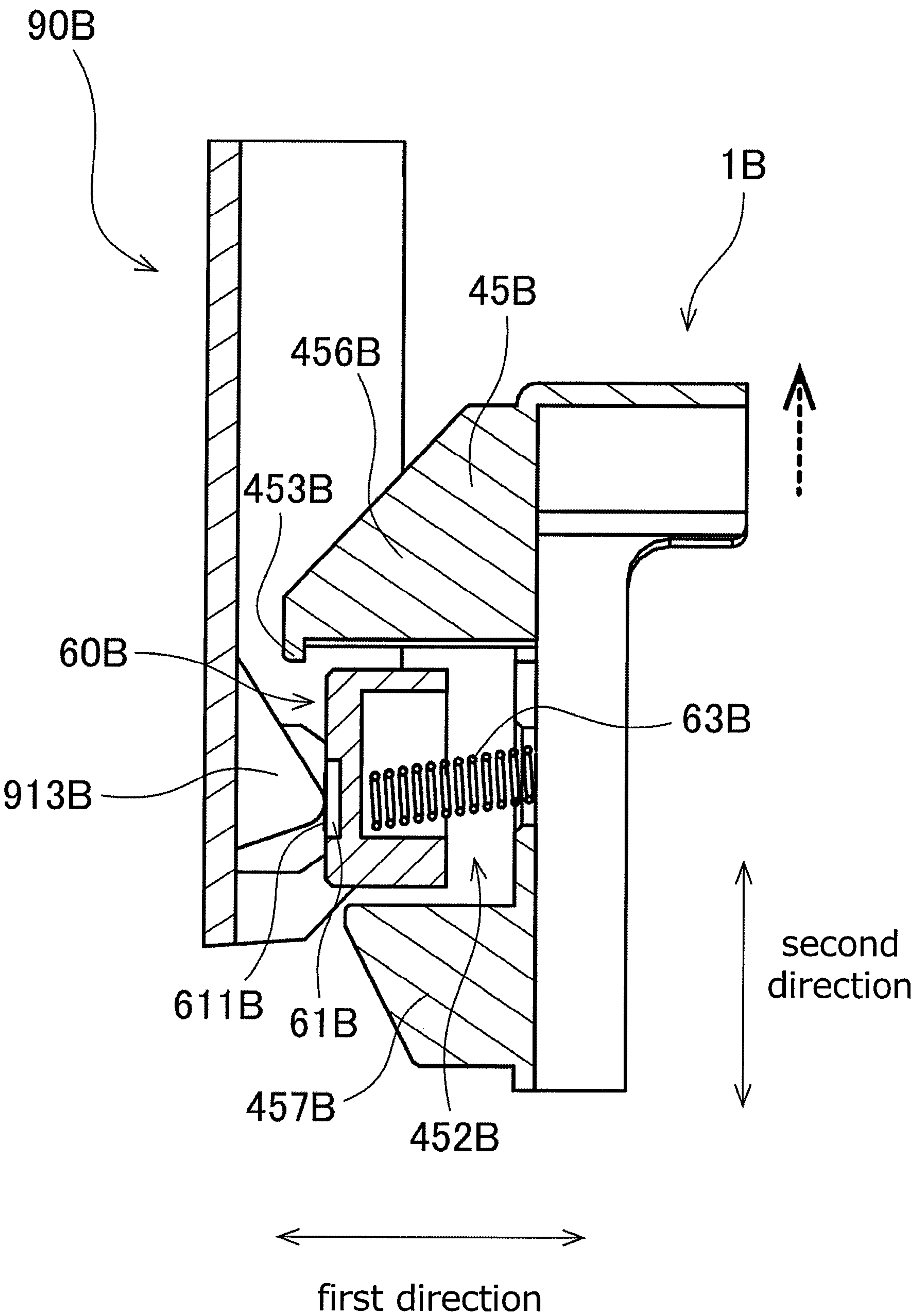


Fig.24

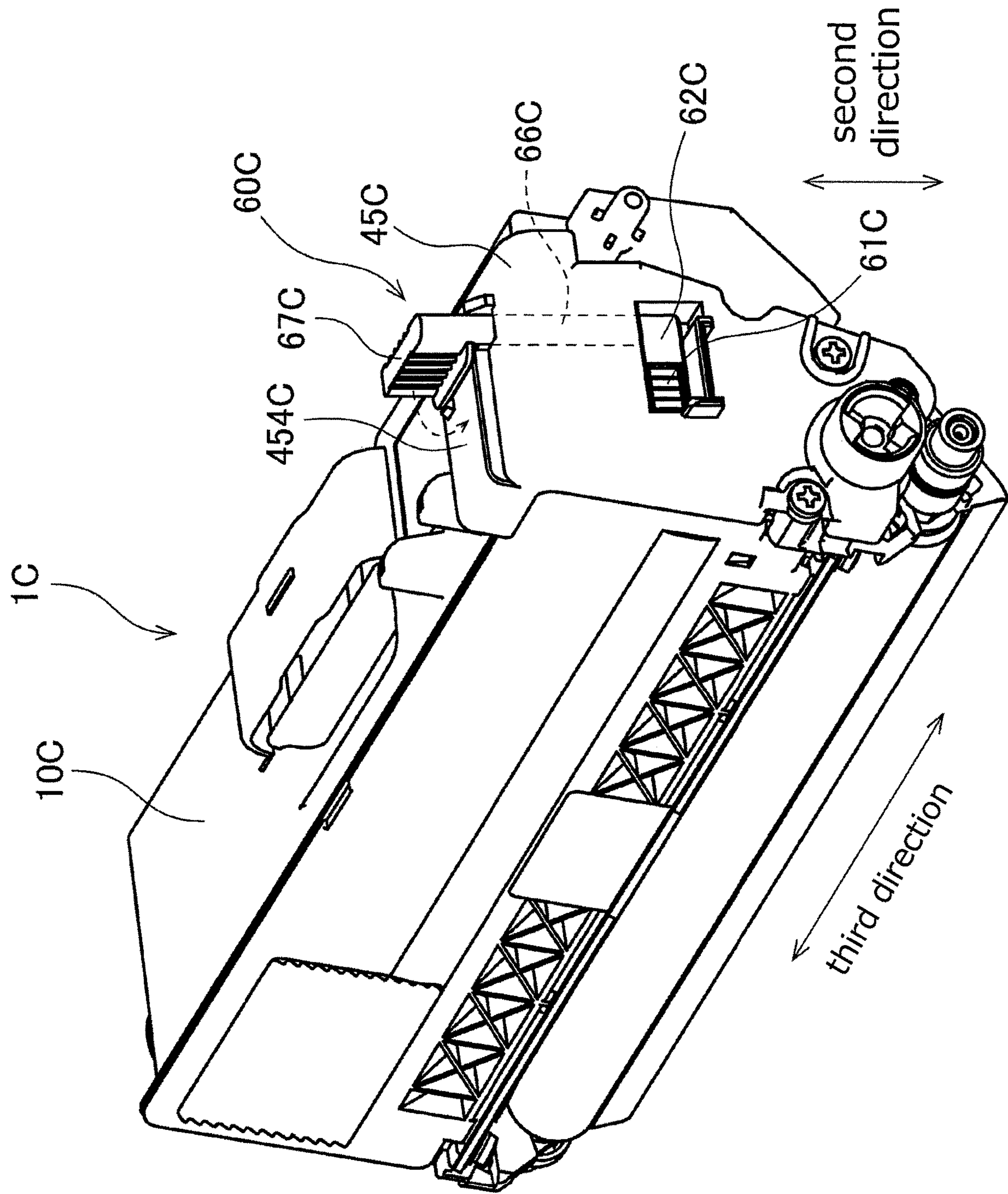


Fig.25

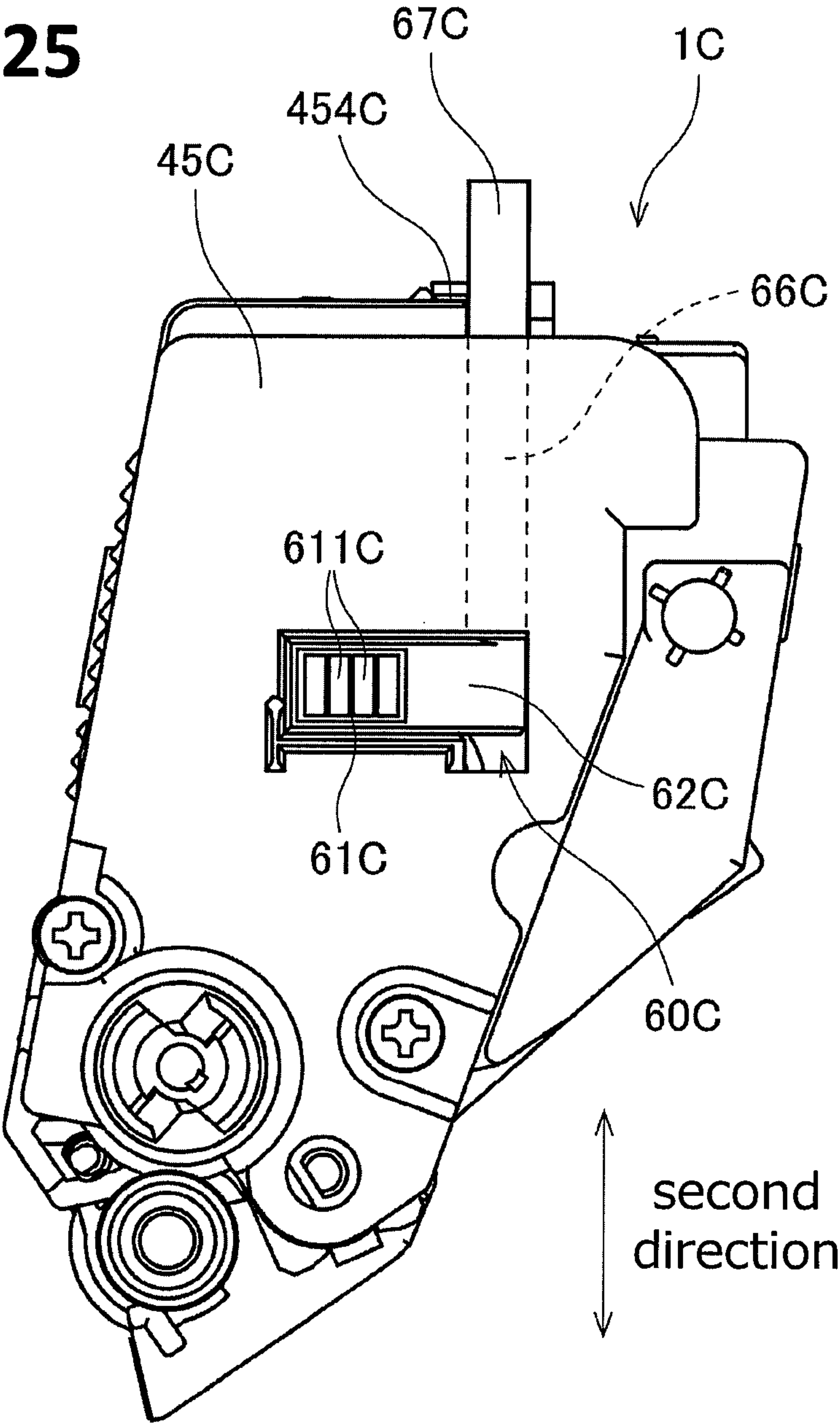


Fig.26

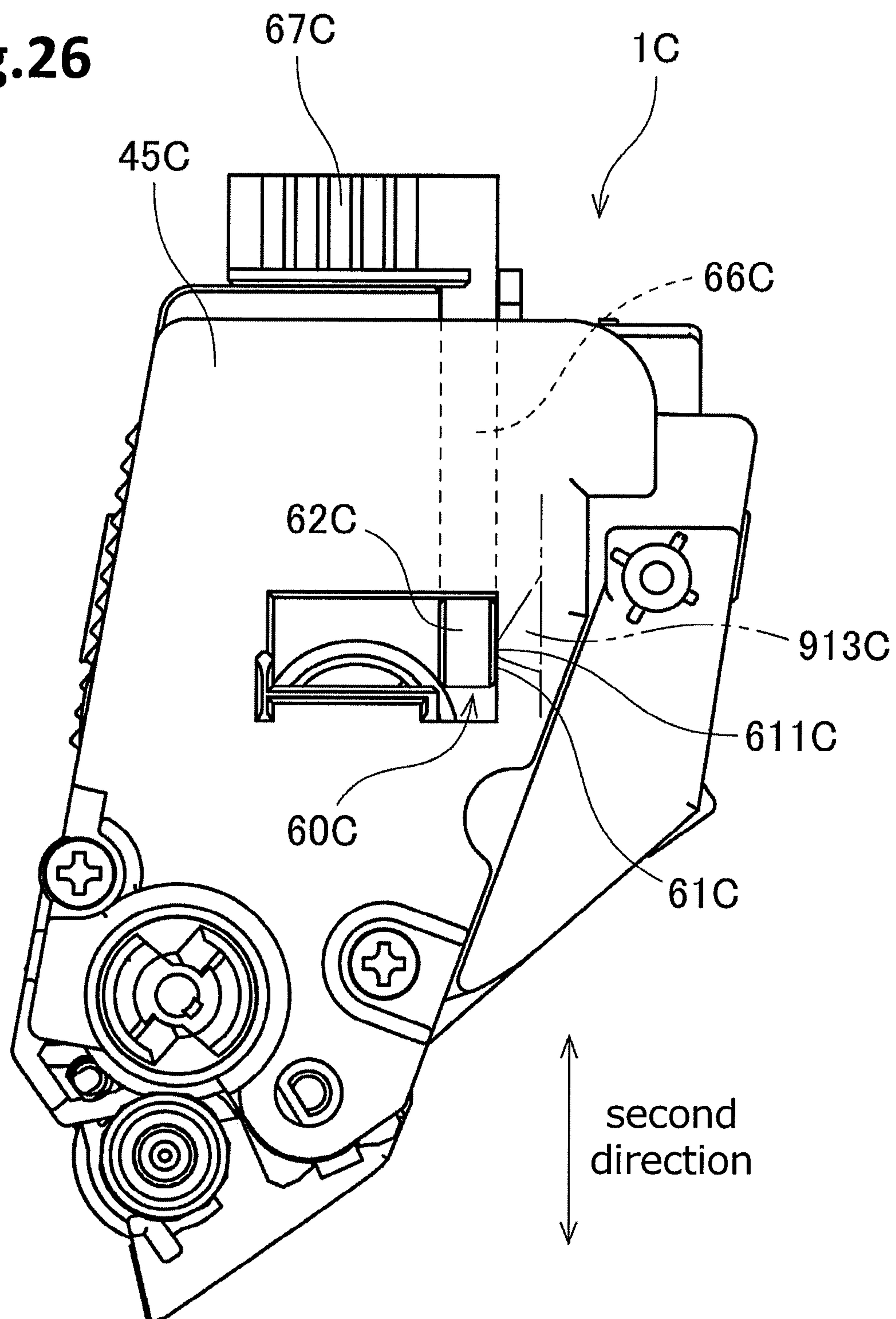


Fig.27

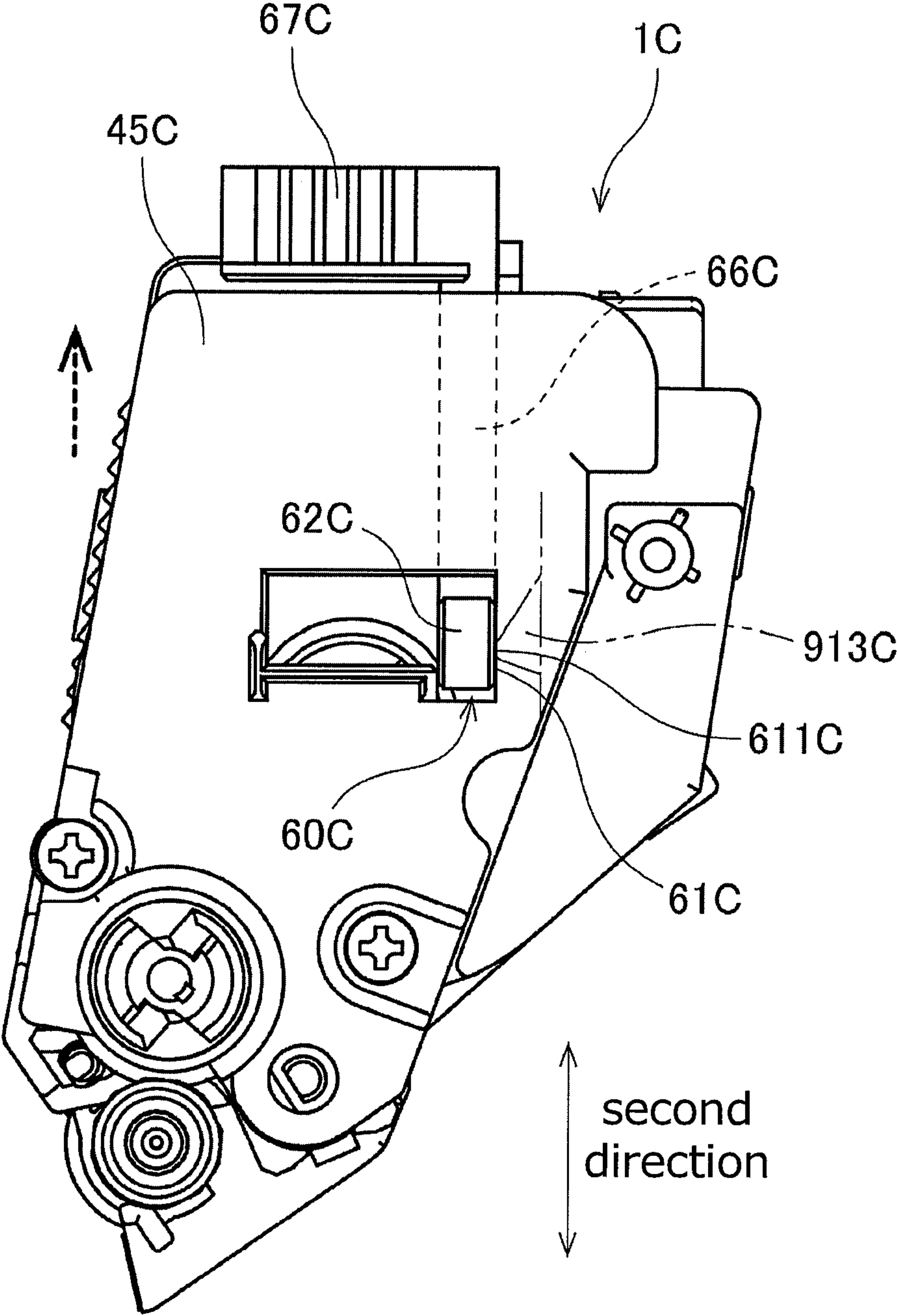


Fig.28

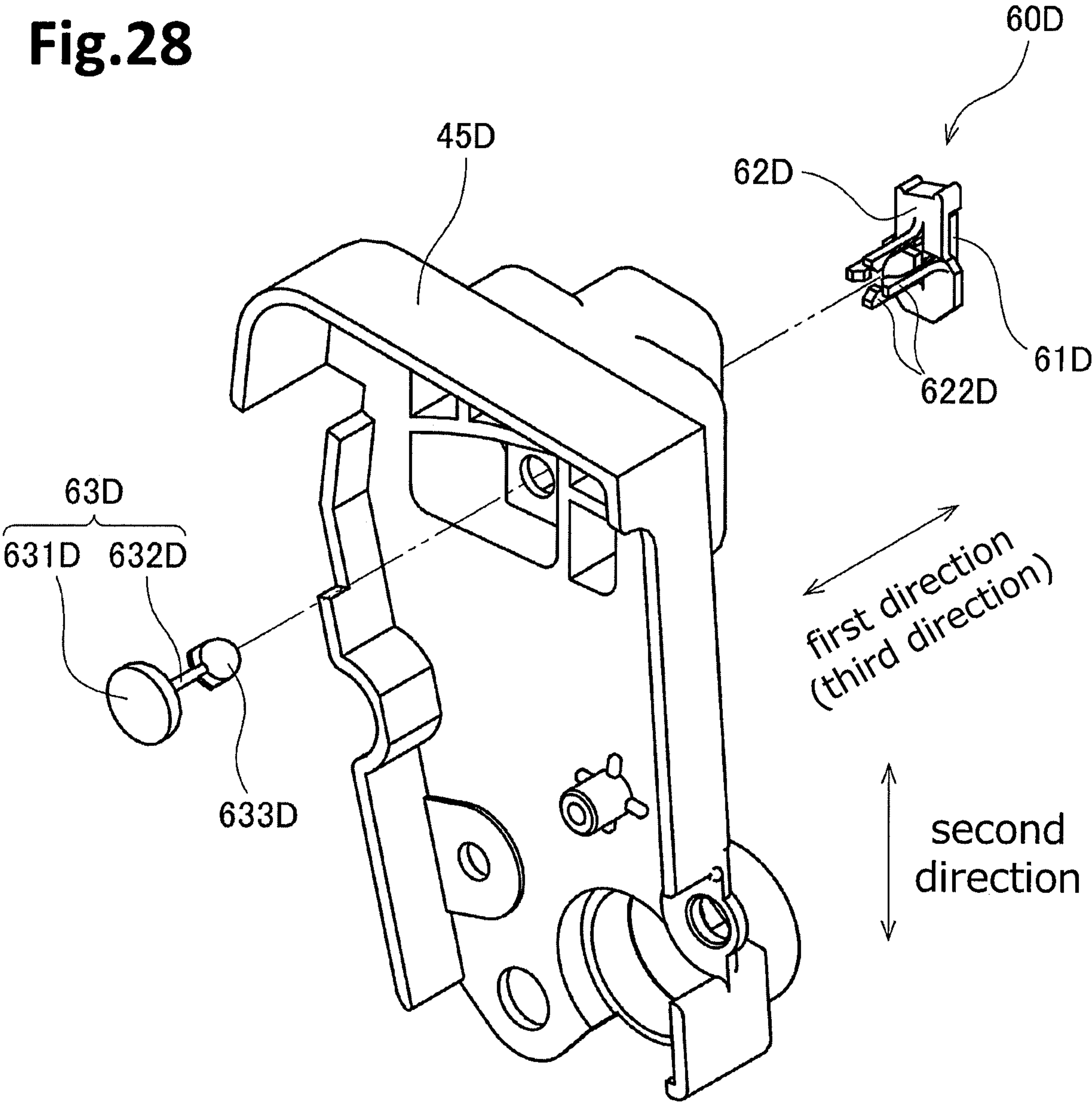


Fig.29

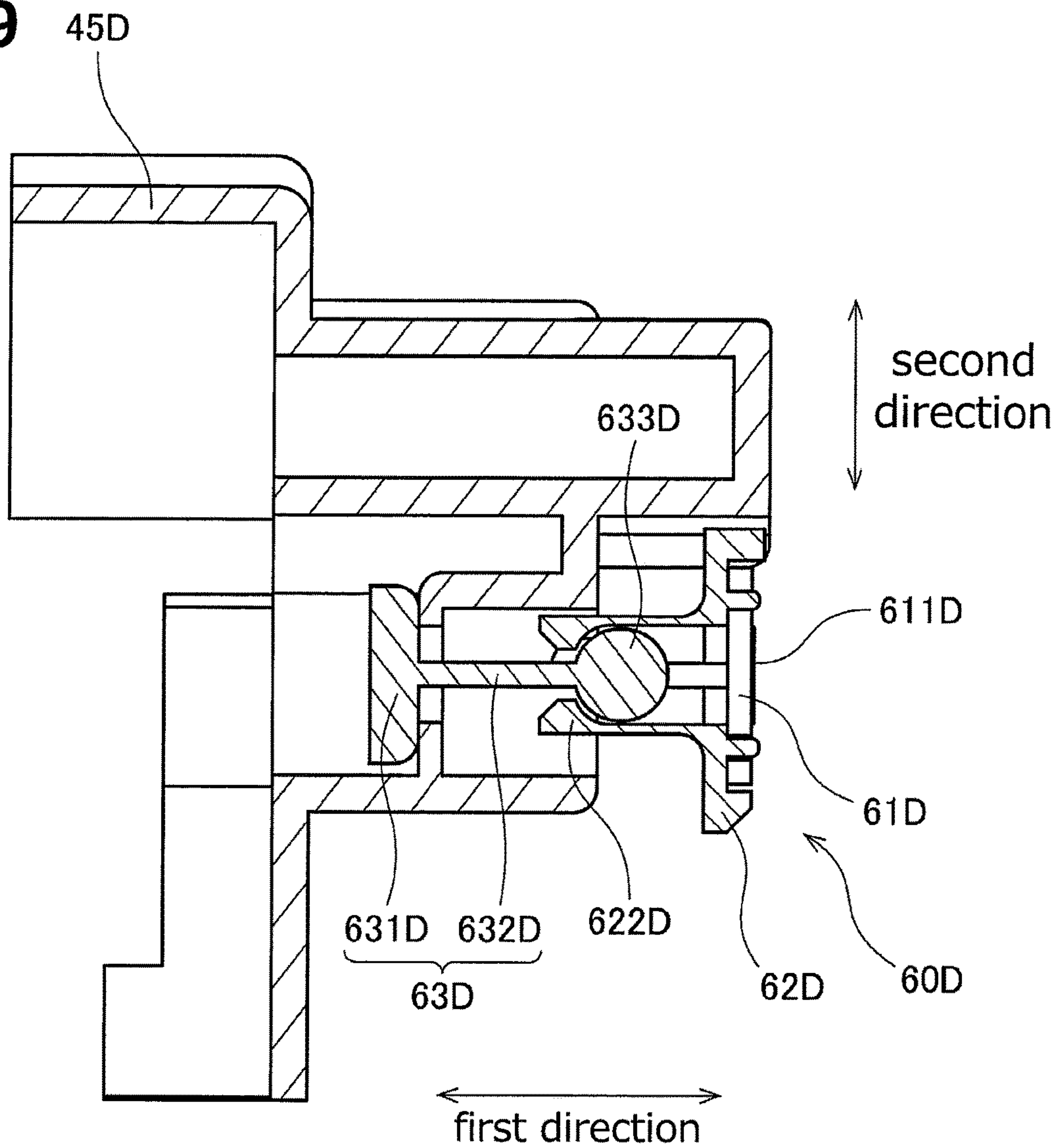


Fig.30

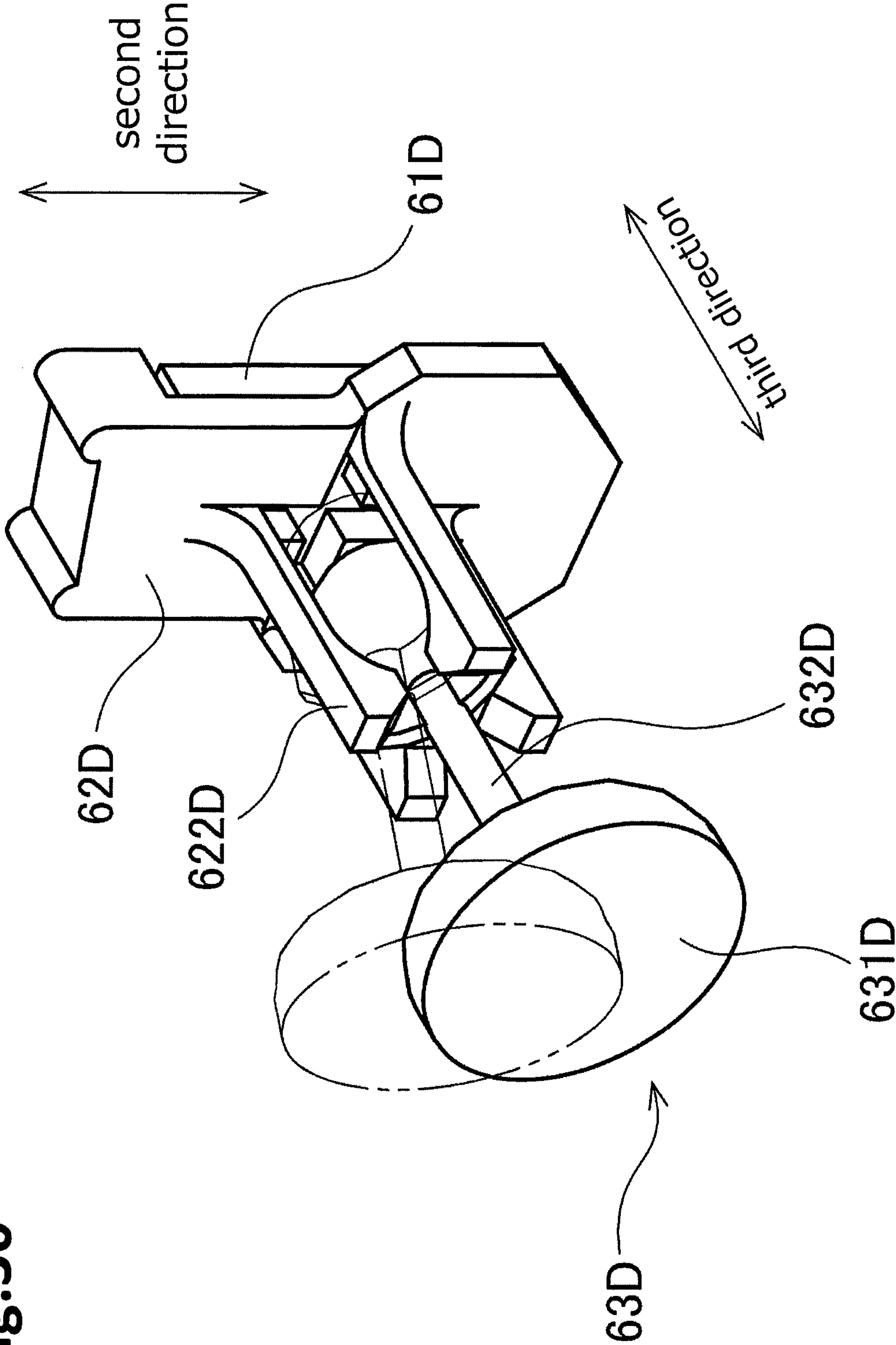


Fig.31

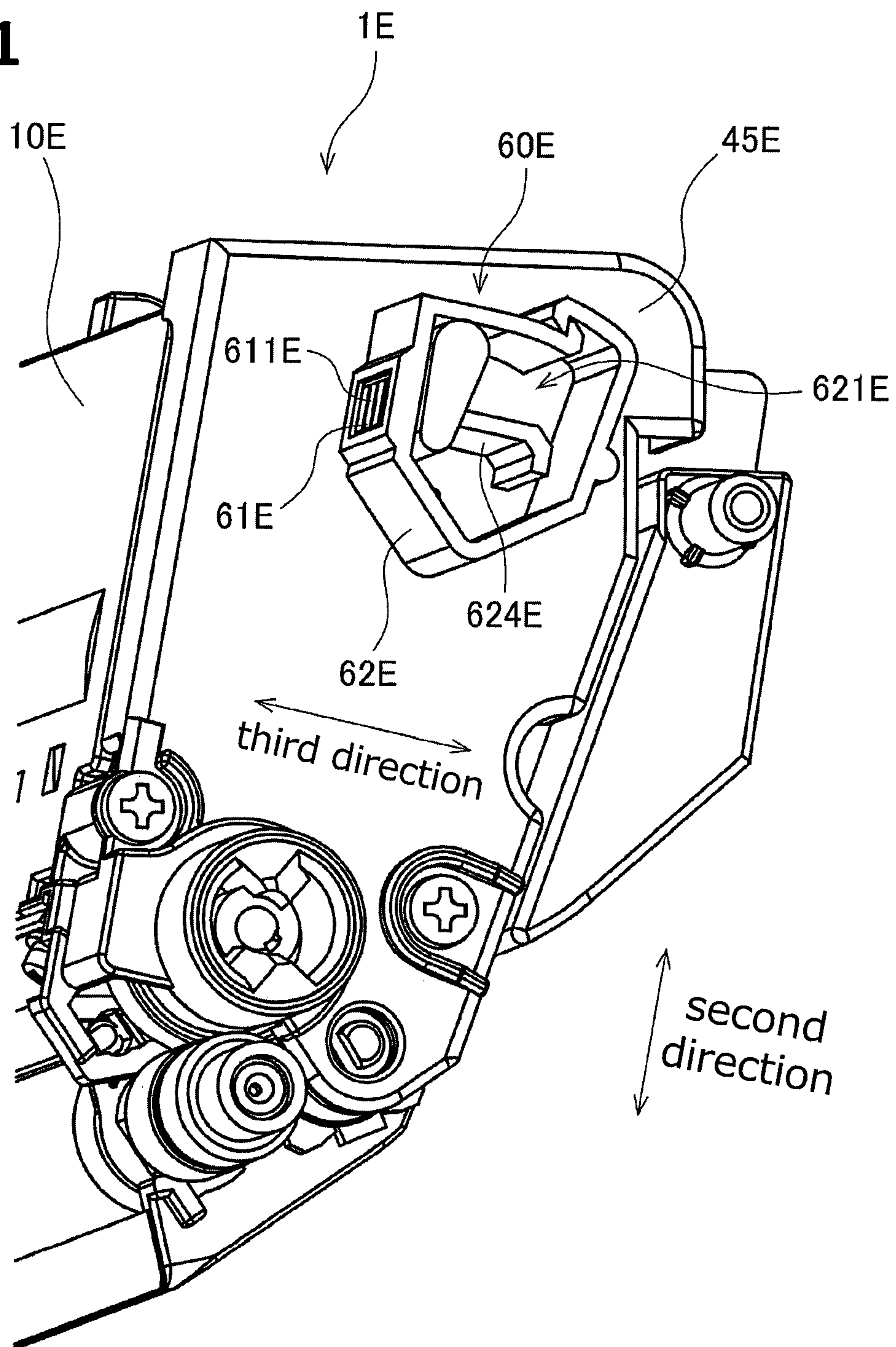


Fig.32

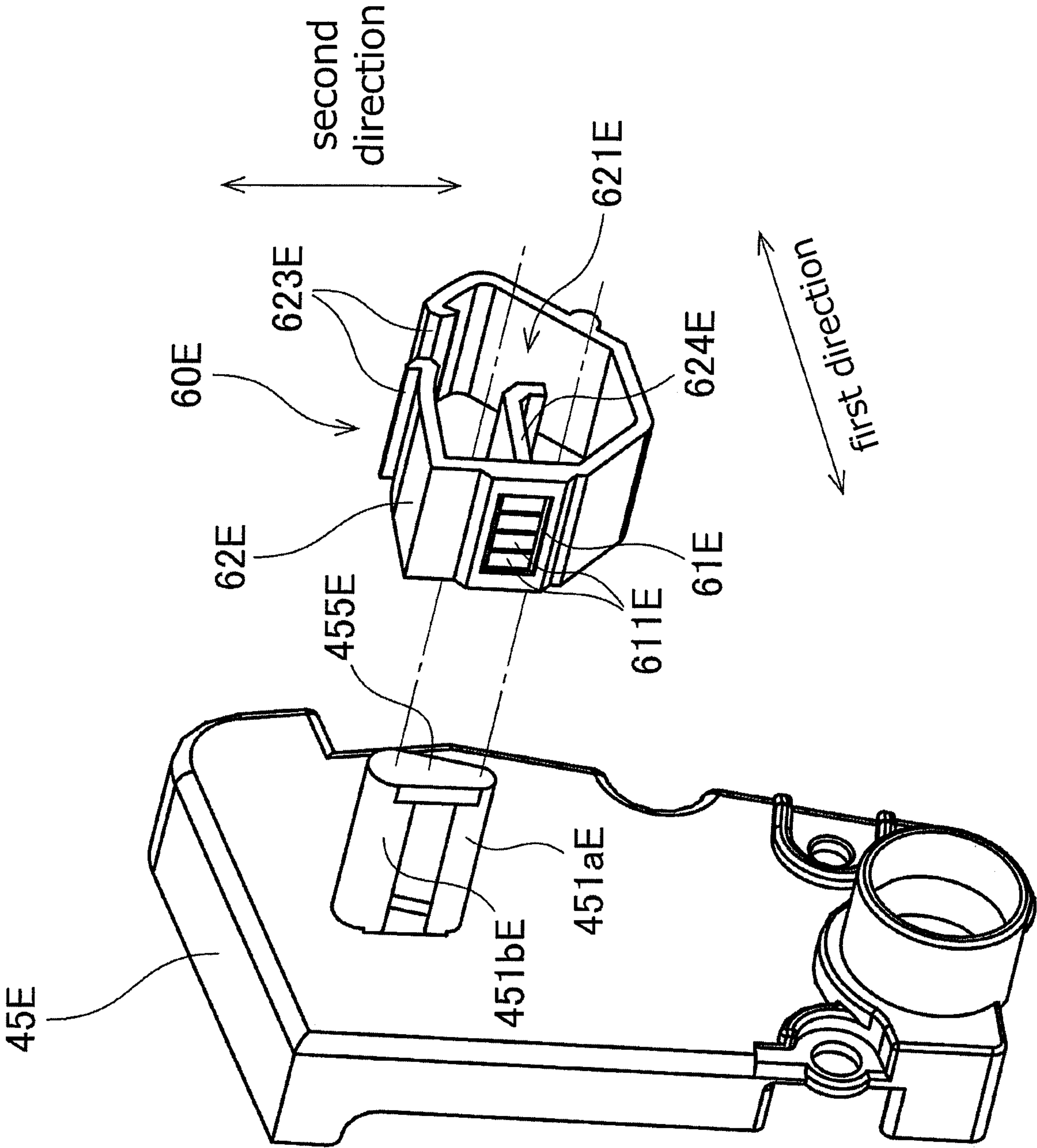


Fig. 33

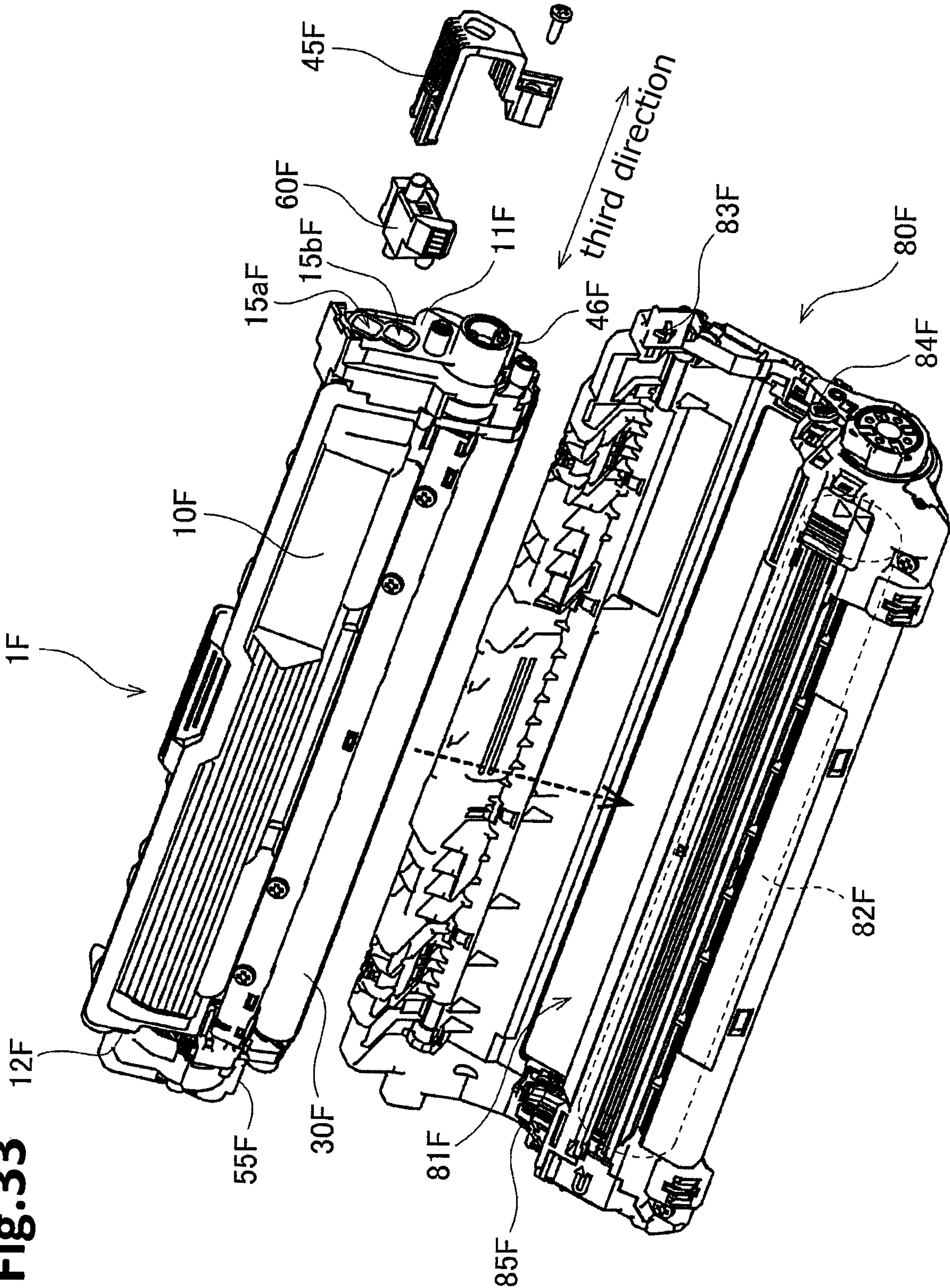


Fig.34

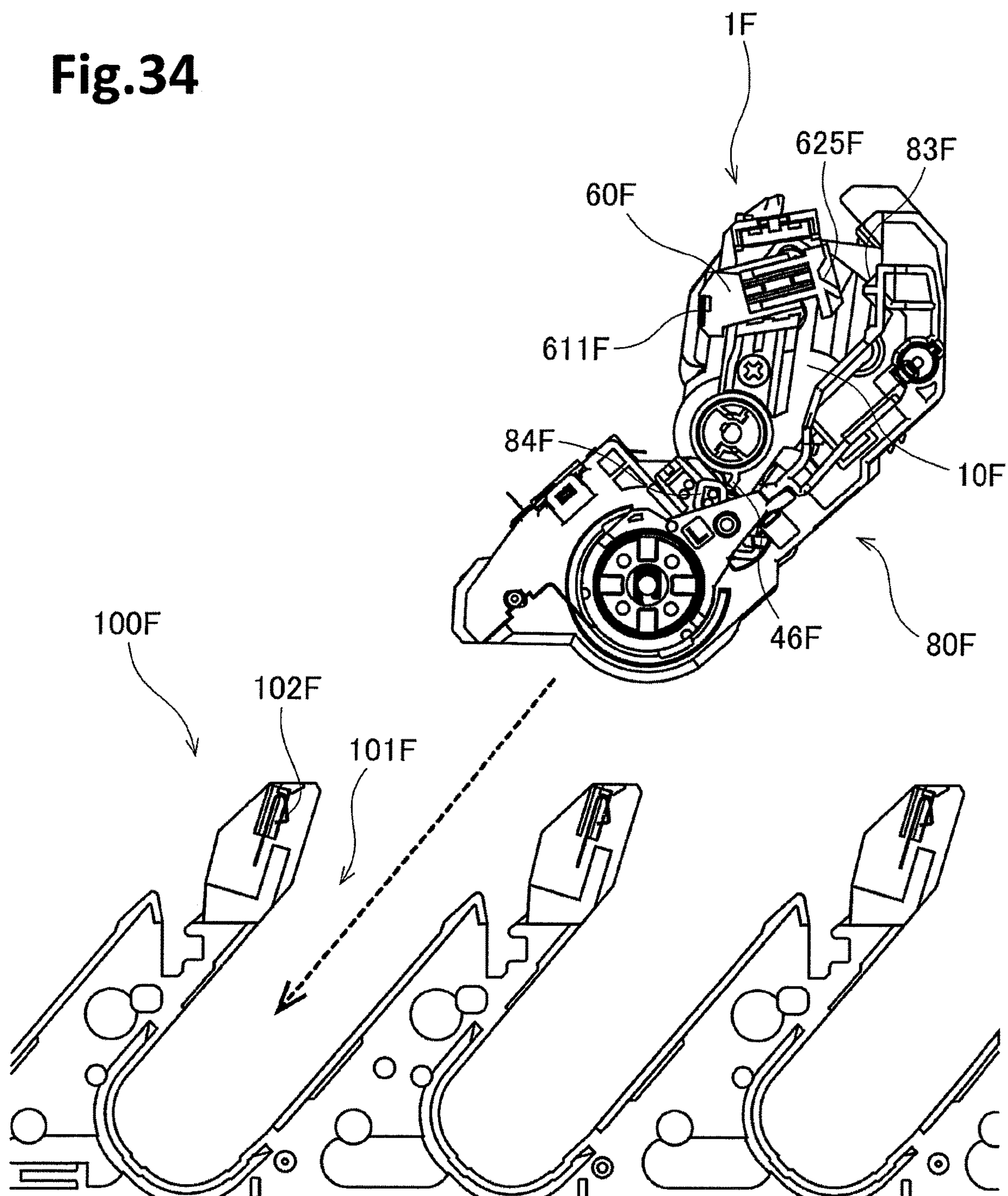
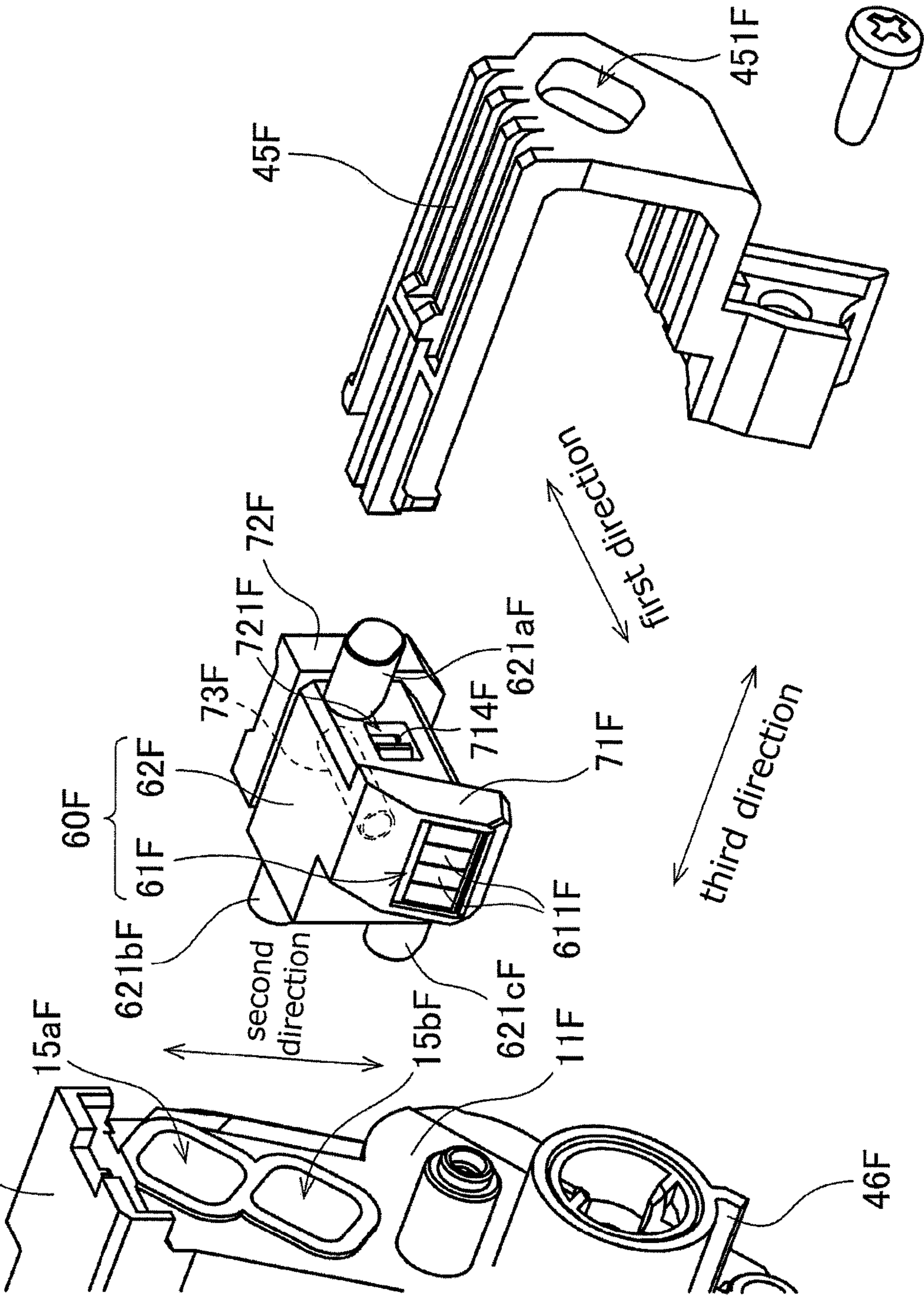


Fig.35 10F



1

DEVELOPING CARTRIDGE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/272,095, filed Feb. 11, 2019, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/030,985, filed Jul. 10, 2018, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/280,679, filed Sep. 29, 2016, which further claims priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2015-254202 filed on Dec. 25, 2015. The contents of the aforementioned applications are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present disclosure relates to a developing cartridge.

BACKGROUND

An electro-photographic type image forming apparatus such as a laser printer and an LED printer is known. A developing cartridge is used in the image forming apparatus. The developing cartridge includes a developing roller for supplying toner. One conventional developing cartridge is capable of being attached to a drawer unit. The drawer unit is positioned in an interior of the image forming apparatus and can be pulled from the inside of the image forming apparatus to the outside of the image forming apparatus. The drawer unit includes a photosensitive drum. The photosensitive drum faces the developing roller when the developing cartridge is attached to the drawer unit.

Further, another conventional developing cartridge is capable of being attached to a drum cartridge. The drum cartridge includes a photosensitive drum. The photosensitive drum faces the developing roller when the developing cartridge is attached to the drum cartridge. When the developing cartridge is attached to the drum cartridge, the photosensitive drum faces a developing roller of the developing cartridge. The developing cartridge is attached to the image forming apparatus in a state where the developing cartridge is attached to the drum cartridge.

SUMMARY

Further, a developing cartridge including a storage medium is also known. An IC (Integrated Circuit) chip is an example of the storage medium. The storage medium has an electric contact surface. The electric contact surface is in contact with an electric connector of the image forming apparatus or the drawer unit in a state where the developing cartridge is attached to the image forming apparatus or drawer unit. However, friction between the electric contact surface and, for example, a protrusion of the image forming apparatus or the drawer unit may occur when the developing cartridge is attached to the image forming apparatus or the drawer unit.

One illustrative object of the present disclosure is to reduce friction between the electric contact surface of the developing cartridge and, for example, the protrusion of the image forming apparatus or the drawer unit.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a developing cartridge;
FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the developing cartridge;

2

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the developing cartridge;
FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the developing cartridge;
FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the developing cartridge;
FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective view of an IC (Integrated Circuit) chip assembly;

FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the IC chip assembly;

FIG. 8 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 9 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 10 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 11 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 12 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 13 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 14 is a view for illustrating the attachment of the developing cartridge;

FIG. 15 is a view for illustrating a separating operation;

FIG. 16 is a partial exploded perspective view of a developing cartridge according to a first modification;

FIG. 17 is a cross-sectional view of an IC (Integrated Circuit) chip assembly according to the first modification;

FIG. 18 is a partial perspective view of a developing cartridge according to a second modification;

FIG. 19 is a view for illustrating the operation of a columnar like resilient member and an IC chip assembly according to the second modification;

FIG. 20 is a view for illustrating the operation of the columnar like resilient member and the IC chip assembly according to the second modification;

FIG. 21 is a view for illustrating an assembly of a developing cartridge according to the second modification;

FIG. 22 is a view for illustrating the assembly of the developing cartridge according to the second modification;

FIG. 23 is a view illustrating a separating operation in the developing cartridge according to the second modification;

FIG. 24 is a perspective view of a developing cartridge according to a third modification;

FIG. 25 is a view of the developing cartridge according to the third embodiment as viewed from one side thereof in a first direction;

FIG. 26 is a view of the developing cartridge according to the third embodiment as viewed from the one side thereof in the first direction;

FIG. 27 is a view of the developing cartridge according to the third embodiment as viewed from the one side thereof in the first direction;

FIG. 28 is an exploded perspective view of a first cover and an IC (Integrated Circuit) chip assembly according to a fourth modification;

FIG. 29 is a cross-sectional view of the first cover and the IC chip assembly according to the fourth modification;

FIG. 30 is a perspective view of the IC chip assembly according to the fourth modification;

FIG. 31 is a partial perspective view of a developing cartridge according to a fifth modification;

FIG. 32 is an exploded perspective view of the first cover and the IC chip assembly according to the fifth modification;

FIG. 33 is a perspective view of a developing cartridge and a drum cartridge according to a sixth embodiment;

FIG. 34 is a view illustrating attachment of the drum cartridge to an image forming apparatus according to the sixth embodiment; and

3

FIG. 35 is an exploded perspective view of the IC chip assembly and components ambient thereto according to the sixth embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

A preferred embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to drawings.

In the following embodiment, a direction which crosses an electric contact surface of an IC chip (in the following embodiment, more preferably, a direction which is perpendicular to the electric contact surface of the IC chip) will be referred to as "first direction", and a moving direction of a casing in a separating operation will be referred to as "second direction". And an extending direction of a rotation axis of a developing roller will be referred to as "third direction".

1. Overall Structure of Developing Cartridge

FIGS. 1 to 5 are perspective views of a developing cartridge 1. The developing cartridge 1 is used for an electro-photographic type image forming apparatus (for example, a laser printer or a LED printer), and is a unit for supplying developer (toner, for example) to a photosensitive drum. As shown in FIG. 1, the developing cartridge 1 is attached to a drawer unit 90 of the image forming apparatus. When the developing cartridge 1 is replaced, the drawer unit 90 is drawn out from a front surface of the image forming apparatus. The drawer unit 90 includes four cartridge holding portions 91, and the developing cartridge 1 is attached to four cartridge holding portions 91, respectively. Each of four cartridge holding portions 91 includes a photosensitive drum.

In the present embodiment, four developing cartridges 1 are attached to one drawer unit 90. Each of the four developing cartridges 1 is configured to accommodate developer therein, and the color of the developer is different colors (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black, for example) among the four developing cartridges respectively. However, the number of developing cartridges 1 that can be attached to the drawer unit 90 may be 1 to 3 or be greater than or equal to 5.

As shown in FIGS. 2 to 5, each developing cartridge 1 according to the present embodiment includes a casing 10, an agitator 20, a developing roller 30, a first gear portion 40, a second gear portion 50, and an IC (Integrated Circuit) chip assembly 60.

The developing roller 30 is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The developing roller 30 according to the present embodiment includes a roller body 31 and a roller shaft 32. The roller body 31 is a cylinder-shaped member extending in the third direction. The roller body 31 is made of an elastic rubber, for example. The roller shaft 32 is a cylindrical member penetrating through the roller body 31 in the third direction. The roller shaft 32 is made of metal or conductive resin.

The roller shaft 32 may not penetrate through the roller body 31 in the third direction. For example, each of a pair of roller shafts 32 may extend from each end of the roller body 31 in the third direction.

The agitator 20 includes an agitator shaft 21 and an agitation blade 22. The agitator shaft 21 extends along the rotation axis extending in the third direction. The agitation blade 22 expands outward from the agitator shaft 21 in a radial direction. The agitation blade 22 is positioned inside a developing chamber 13 of the casing 10. A first agitator gear 44 and a second agitator gear 51 described later are mounted to both end portions in the third direction of the

4

agitator shaft 21, respectively. Accordingly, the agitator shaft 21 and the agitation blade 22 are rotatable with the first agitator gear 44 and the second agitator gear 51. The developer which is accommodated in the developing chamber 13 is agitated by rotation of the agitation blade 22. Instead of the agitation blade 22, the agitator may include an agitation film.

The casing 10 is a case configured to accommodate therein developer (toner, for example) for electro-photographic printing. The casing 10 includes a first outer surface 11 and a second outer surface 12. The first outer surface 11 and the second outer surface 12 are separated from each other in the third direction. The first gear portion 40 and the IC chip assembly 60 are positioned at the first outer surface 11. The second gear portion 50 is positioned at the second outer surface 12. The casing 10 extends in the third direction from the first outer surface 11 to the second outer surface 12. The developing chamber 13 for accommodating the developer is provided in the casing 10.

The casing 10 has an opening 14. The opening 14 communicates between the developing chamber 13 and an exterior of the developing chamber 13. The opening 14 is positioned at one end portion in the second direction of the casing 10. The developing roller 30 is positioned at the opening 14. That is, the developing roller 30 is positioned closer to one side of the casing 10 than to the center of the casing 10 in the second direction. The roller body 31 is fixed to the roller shaft 32 so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the roller shaft 32. One end portion of the roller shaft 32 in the third direction is mounted to a developing gear 42 described later so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the developing gear 42. When the developing gear 42 rotates, the roller shaft 32 rotates with the developing gear 42 and then the roller body 31 rotates together with the roller shaft 32.

When the developing cartridge 1 receives a driving force, the developer is supplied from the developing chamber 13 in the casing 10 onto an outer peripheral surface of the developing roller 30 via a supply roller (omitted in the figure). At this time, the developer is tribocharged between the supply roller and the developing roller 30. On the other hand, bias voltage is applied to the roller shaft 32 of the developing roller 30. Accordingly, static electricity between the roller shaft 32 and the developer moves the developer toward the outer peripheral surface of the roller body 31.

The developing cartridge 1 further includes a layer thickness regulation blade which is omitted in the figure. The layer thickness regulation blade regulates a thin layer of the developer supplied onto the outer peripheral surface of the roller body 31 so that the thickness of the developer becomes constant. Then, the developer on the outer peripheral surface of the roller body 31 is supplied to the photosensitive drum of the drawer unit 90. At this time, the developer moves from the roller body 31 to the photosensitive drum on the basis of an electrostatic latent image formed on the outer peripheral surface of the photosensitive drum. Accordingly, the electrostatic latent image is visualized on the outer peripheral surface of the photosensitive drum.

The first gear portion 40 is positioned at one end portion in the third direction of the casing 10. That is, the first gear portion 40 is positioned at the first outer surface 11. FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the developing cartridge 1 in a state in which the first gear portion 40 is disassembled. As shown in FIG. 4, the first gear portion 40 includes a coupling 41, a developing gear 42, an idle gear 43, a first agitator gear 44, and a first cover 45. A plurality of gear teeth of each gear are not illustrated in FIG. 4.

5

The coupling **41** is a gear for initially receiving the driving force applied from the image forming apparatus. The coupling **41** is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The coupling **41** includes a coupling portion **411** and a coupling gear **412**. The coupling portion **411** and the coupling gear **412** are integral with each other and made of a resin, for example. The coupling portion **411** has a coupling hole **413** depressed in the third direction. The coupling gear **412** includes a plurality of gear teeth. The gear teeth are provided on the entire outer peripheral surface of the coupling gear **412** at equal intervals.

When the drawer unit **90** to which the developing cartridge **1** is attached is accommodated in the image forming apparatus, a drive shaft of the image forming apparatus is inserted into the coupling hole **413** of the coupling portion **411**. With this configuration, the drive shaft and the coupling portion **411** are connected so as to be incapable of rotating relative to each other. Accordingly, the coupling portion **411** rotates when the drive shaft rotates, and the coupling gear **412** rotates together with the coupling portion **411**.

The developing gear **42** is a gear for rotating the developing roller **30**. The developing gear **42** is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The developing gear **42** includes a plurality of gear teeth. The gear teeth are provided on the entire outer peripheral surface of the developing gear **42** at equal intervals. At least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the coupling gear **412** meshes with at least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the developing gear **42**. Further, the developing gear **42** is mounted to the end portion of the roller shaft **32** in the third direction so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the roller shaft **32**. With this construction, when the coupling gear **412** rotates, the developing gear **42** rotates with the coupling gear **412** and the developing roller **30** also rotates with the developing gear **42**.

The idle gear **43** is a gear for transmitting rotational driving force of the coupling gear **412** to the first agitator gear **44**. The idle gear **43** is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The idle gear **43** includes a large diameter gear portion **431** and a small diameter gear portion **432**. The large diameter gear portion **431** and the small diameter gear portion **432** are arranged in the third direction. The small diameter gear portion **432** is positioned between the large diameter gear portion **431** and the first outer surface **11** of the casing **10**. In other words, the large diameter gear portion **431** is farther away from the first outer surface **11** than the small diameter gear portion **432** is. A diameter of the small diameter gear portion **432** is smaller than a diameter of the large diameter gear portion **431**. In other words, a diameter of an addendum circle of the small diameter gear portion **432** is smaller than a diameter of an addendum circle of the large diameter gear portion **431**. The large diameter gear portion **431** and the small diameter gear portion **432** are integral with each other and are made of a resin.

The large diameter gear portion **431** includes a plurality of gear teeth, and the plurality of gear teeth are provided on the entire outer peripheral surface of the large diameter gear portion **431** at equal intervals. The small diameter gear portion **432** includes a plurality of gear teeth, and the plurality of gear teeth are provided on the entire outer peripheral surface of the small diameter gear portion **432** at equal intervals. The number of gear teeth of the small diameter gear portion **432** is less than the number of gear teeth of the large diameter gear portion **431**. At least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the coupling gear **412** meshes with at least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth

6

of the large diameter gear portion **431**. Further, at least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the small diameter gear portion **432** meshes with at least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the first agitator gear **44**. When the coupling gear **412** rotates, the large diameter gear portion **431** rotates together with the coupling gear **412** and the small diameter gear portion **432** rotates together with the large diameter gear portion **431**. Also, the first agitator gear **44** rotates with the rotation of the small diameter gear portion **432**.

The first agitator gear **44** is a gear for rotating the agitator **20** in the developing chamber **13**. The first agitator gear **44** is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The first agitator gear **44** includes a plurality of gear teeth, and the plurality of gear teeth are provided on the entire outer peripheral surface of the first agitator gear **44** at equal intervals. As described above, at least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the small diameter gear portion **432** meshes with the at least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the first agitator gear **44**. Further, the first agitator gear **44** is mounted to one end portion of the agitator shaft **21** in the third direction so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the agitator shaft **21**. With the configuration, when the rotational driving force is transmitted from the coupling **41** to the first agitator gear **44** via the idle gear **43**, the first agitator gear **44** rotates and the agitator **20** rotates together with the first agitator gear **44**.

The first cover **45** is fixed to the first outer surface **11** of the casing **10** by screws, for example. The coupling gear **412**, the developing gear **42**, the idle gear **43**, and the first agitator gear **44** are accommodated in a space between the first outer surface **11** and the first cover **45**. The coupling hole **413** of the coupling portion **411** is exposed to an outside of the first cover **45**. The first cover **45** according to the present embodiment also serves as a holder cover for holding the holder **62** of the IC chip assembly **60** described later. A structure of the first cover **45** as the holder cover will be described later in detail.

The second gear portion **50** is positioned at the other end portion of the casing **10** in the third direction. In other words, the second gear portion **50** is positioned at the second outer surface **12**. FIG. **5** is a perspective view of the developing cartridge **1** in which the second gear portion **50** is exploded. As illustrated in FIG. **5**, the second gear portion **50** includes a second agitator gear **51**, a detection gear **52**, an electrically conductive member **53**, and a second cover **54**. Note that, in FIG. **5**, gear teeth are not illustrated in the second agitator gear **51** and the detection gear **52**.

The second agitator gear **51** is a gear for transmitting rotational driving force of the agitator shaft **21** to the detection gear **52**. The second agitator gear **51** is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The second agitator gear **51** includes a plurality of gear teeth, and the plurality of gear teeth are provided on the entire outer peripheral surface of the second agitator gear **51** at equal intervals. At least a portion of the plurality of gear teeth of the second agitator gear **51** meshes with at least a portion of a plurality of gear teeth of the detection gear **52**. The second agitator gear **51** is mounted to the other end portion of the agitator shaft **21** in the third direction so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the agitator shaft **21**. With this configuration, the second agitator gear **51** rotates with rotation of the agitator shaft **21**.

The detection gear **52** is a gear for providing information on the developing cartridge **1** for the image forming apparatus. The information on the developing cartridge **1** includes, for example, information as to whether the devel-

oping cartridge **1** is a new (unused) cartridge or a used cartridge. The information on the developing cartridge **1** also includes, for example, a product specification of the developing cartridge **1**. The product specification of the developing cartridge **1** includes, for example, the number of sheets that can be printed with the developer accommodated in the developing cartridge **1** (i.e. sheet-yield number).

The detection gear **52** is rotatable about a rotation axis extending in the third direction. The detection gear **52** includes a plurality of gear teeth. The gear teeth are provided on a portion of an outer peripheral surface of the detection gear **52**. When the drawer unit **90** to which an unused developing cartridge **1** is attached is attached in the image forming apparatus, the detection gear **52** can rotate by meshing with the second agitator gear **51**. When the detection gear **52** is disengaged from the second agitator gear **51**, rotation of the detection gear **52** is stopped.

When the drawer unit **90** to which a used developing cartridge **1** is attached is attached in the image forming apparatus, the detection gear **52** does not mesh with the second agitator gear **51**. Thus, the detection gear **52** cannot rotate.

A gear may be provided between the second agitator gear **51** and the detection gear **52**. For example, the second gear portion **50** may further include a second idle gear meshing with both the second agitator gear **51** and the detection gear **52**. In this case, rotational driving force of the second agitator gear **51** may be transmitted to the detection gear **52** via the second idle gear.

As illustrated in FIG. 5, the detection gear **52** includes a detecting protrusion **521**. The detecting protrusion **521** protrudes in the third direction. The detecting protrusion **521** has a circular arc shape extending along a portion of an addendum circle of the detection gear about the rotation axis of the detection gear **52**.

The electrically conductive member **53** is electrically conductive. The electrically conductive member **53** is formed of a material such as electrically conductive metal or electrically conductive resin. The electrically conductive member **53** is positioned at the second outer surface **12** of the casing **10**. The electrically conductive member **53** includes a gear shaft **531** protruding in the third direction. The detection gear **52** rotates about the gear shaft **531** in a state where the detection gear **52** is supported by the gear shaft **531**. The electrically conductive member **53** further includes a bearing portion **532**. The bearing portion **532** is in contact with the roller shaft **32** of the developing roller **30**.

The drawer unit **90** includes an electrically conductive lever (not illustrated) that is in contact with the gear shaft **531** in a state where the developing cartridge **1** is attached to the drawer unit **90**. Instead of the drawer unit **90**, the image forming apparatus may include the electrically conductive lever. When the lever contacts the gear shaft **531**, electrical connection between the lever and the electrically conductive member **53** is established and electrical connection between the electrically conductive member **53** and the roller shaft **32** is also established. When the image forming apparatus is in operation, electric power is supplied to the roller shaft **32** through the lever, and the roller shaft **32** can keep a prescribed bias voltage. Note that the detecting protrusion **521** covers a portion of an outer peripheral surface of the gear shaft **531**. Hence, when the detection gear **52** rotates after a new developing cartridge **1** is attached in the drawer unit **90**, the contact state between the lever and the gear shaft **531** changes according to the shape of the detection gear **52**. More specifically, the contact state between the lever and the gear shaft **531** changes according

to the shape of the detecting protrusion **521** because the detecting protrusion **521** pass through between the lever and the gear shaft according to the rotation of the detection gear **52**. Alternatively, the contact state between the lever and the gear shaft **531** changes according to the number of the detecting protrusions **521** which are provided with the detection gear **52** because one or more of detecting protrusions **521** pass through between the lever and the gear shaft according to the rotation of the detection gear **52**. The image forming apparatus recognizes the change in the contact state between the lever and the gear shaft **531** to identify whether the attached developing cartridge **1** is new or used and/or the product specification of the mounted developing cartridge **1**.

However, the method for detecting the information on the developing cartridge **1** using the detection gear **52** is not limited to detection of electrical conduction. For example, movement of the lever may be optically detected. Further, the detecting protrusion **521** may be formed to have a different circumferential position and length from those in the present embodiment. Further, the detection gear **52** may have a plurality of detecting protrusions **521**. The shape of the detection gear **52** may vary according to the product specification of the developing cartridge **1** such as the number of printable sheets. More specifically, the number of the detecting protrusions **521** may be differentiated among a plural type of the developing cartridges, and the product specification regarding each of the developing cartridges may be identified based on the number of the detecting protrusions **21**. When each of the plural type of the developing cartridges includes the number of the detecting protrusions **521**, circumferential intervals between the plurality of detecting projections **521** may be differentiated among the plural type of the developing cartridges. In the above-described case, a circumferential length of each detecting projection **521** and/or a radial length of each detecting projection **521** may be differentiated based on the product specification regarding each of the developing cartridges. In this way, variations in the number of the detecting protrusions **521** and/or circumferential positions of the each of the detecting projections **521** enables the image forming apparatus to identify the product specification regarding each of the developing cartridges.

The detection gear **52** may be configured of a plurality of components. For example, the detecting protrusion **521** and the detection gear **52** may be different components. Further, the detection gear **52** may include a detection gear body and a supplemental member that shifts its position relative to the detection gear body in accordance with rotation of the detection gear body. In this case, the supplemental member changes between a first position in which the supplemental member is in contact with the lever and a second position in which the supplemental member is not in contact with the lever in accordance with shifting the position of the supplemental member relative to the detection gear body. As a result, the supplemental member may change the position of the lever.

Further, the detection gear **52** may be configured of a movable gear that can move in the third direction. The movable gear may not be limited to a partially toothless gear. In other words, the movable gear includes a plurality of gear teeth, and the plurality of gear teeth are provided on an outer peripheral surface of the movable gear along the circumference of the movable gear. In this case, the movable gear moves in the third direction in accordance with rotation of the movable gear, thereby the movable gear is disengaged from the second agitator gear **51**. The movable gear may be

moved in the third direction away from the second outer surface 12 or toward the second outer surface 12.

Further, the detection gear 52 may include a cam, and the cam may contact the detecting protrusion 521. In this case, the cam rotates together with rotation of the detection gear 52, and the rotating cam contacts the detecting projection 521. This causes the detecting projection 521 to move relative to the detection gear 52. The detecting protrusion 521 may be rotatably attached to a shaft provided at the second outer surface 12 or the second cover 54. Alternatively, the detecting protrusion 521 may have a shaft, and the shaft of the detecting projection 521 may be inserted into a hole formed in the second outer surface 12 or the second cover 54 so that the detecting protrusion 521 is rotatably supported by the second outer surface 12 or the second cover 54.

Further, in the present embodiment, the gear shaft 531 extends in the third direction from the second outer surface 12. However, the gear shaft 531 does not need to be in direct contact with the second outer surface 12. For example, the casing 10 may have a through-hole penetrating the second outer surface 12 and a cap fitted with the through-hole, and a gear shift may extend from the cap in the third direction. In this case, the cap includes the gear shift protruding in the third direction toward the detection gear 52, and the detection gear 52 rotates about the gear shaft 531 in a state where the detection gear is supported by the gear shaft 531.

The second cover 54 is fixed to the second outer surface 12 of the casing 10 by a screw, for example. The second agitator gear 51, the detection gear 52, and the electrically conductive member 53 are accommodated in a space between the second outer surface 12 and the second cover 54. The second cover 54 has an opening 541. A portion of the detection gear 52 and a portion of the gear shaft 531 are exposed to an outside through the opening 541. The electrically conductive lever of the drawer unit 90 contacts the detection gear 52 and the gear shaft 531 through the opening 541.

2. IC Chip Assembly

The IC chip assembly 60 is positioned at the first outer surface 11 of the casing 10. FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective view of the IC chip assembly 60. FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the IC chip assembly 60 taken along a plane perpendicular to the third direction. As shown in FIGS. 2 through 7, the IC chip assembly 60 includes an IC (Integrated Circuit) chip 61 as a storage medium and a holder 62 for holding the IC chip 61. The holder 62 is held to the first cover 45 at one end of the casing 10 in the third direction. The IC chip 61 stores various information on the developing cartridge 1. The IC chip 61 includes an electric contact surface 611. The electric contact surface 611 is made of electrically conductive metal. The IC chip 61 is fixed to an outer surface of the holder 62 in the third direction.

The drawer unit 90 includes an electric connector. The electric connector is made of metal, for example. The electric connector of the drawer unit 90 contacts the electric contact surface 611 when the developing cartridge 1 is attached to the drawer unit 90. At this time, the image forming apparatus can perform at least one of reading information from the IC chip 61 and writing information in the IC chip 61.

At least a portion of the holder 62 is covered by the first cover 45. The holder 62 includes a boss 621a, a boss 621b, and a boss 621c. Each of the boss 621a and boss 621b extends in the third direction toward the first cover 45 from a surface of the holder 62 opposite to a surface thereof facing the casing 10. The boss 621a and boss 621b are aligned in

the second direction. As shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, the first cover 45 has a through-hole 451a and a through-hole 451b. The through-hole 451a and through-hole 451b penetrate the first cover 45 in the third direction, respectively. The through-hole 451a and through-hole 451b are aligned in the second direction. The boss 621a is inserted into the through-hole 451a. The boss 621b is inserted into the through-hole 451b.

The boss 621c extends in the third direction toward the casing 10 from the surface of the holder 62 facing the casing 10. On the other hand, the casing 10 includes a recessed portion 15. The recessed portion 15 is recessed in the third direction on the first outer surface 11 of the casing 10. The boss 621c is inserted into the recessed portion 15. The bosses 621a, 621b and 621c may have a circular columnar shape or a rectangular columnar shape, respectively.

The through-hole 451a has a dimension (inner dimension) in the second direction larger than a dimension (outside dimension) of the boss 621a in the second direction. The through-hole 451b has a dimension (inner dimension) in the second direction larger than a dimension (outside dimension) of the boss 621b in the second direction. Further, the recessed portion 15 has a dimension (inner dimension) in the second direction larger than a dimension (outer dimension) of the boss 621c in the second direction. Hence, the holder 62 can move with the bosses 621a, 621b and 621c in the second direction relative to the casing 10 and the first cover 45. As the holder 62 moves in the second direction, the IC chip 61 having the electric contact surface 611 also moves in the second direction together with the holder 62.

The through-hole 451a has a dimension (inner dimension) in the first direction larger than a dimension (outer dimension) of the boss 621a in the first direction. The through-hole 451b has a dimension (inner dimension) in the first direction larger than a dimension (outer dimension) of the boss 621b in the first direction. Further, the recessed portion 15 has a dimension (inner dimension) in the first direction larger than a dimension (outer dimension) of the boss 621c in the first direction. Hence, the holder 62 can move with the bosses 621a, 621b and 621c in the first direction relative to the casing 10 and the first cover 45. As the holder 62 moves in the first direction, the IC chip 61 having the electric contact surface 611 also moves in the first direction together with the holder 62. The holder 62 may be movable in the third direction between the first cover 45 and the first outer surface 11.

Alternatively, the holder 62 may include a single boss, or equal to or more than three bosses. Likewise, the first cover 45 may have a single through-hole, or equal to or more than three through-holes. Or, instead of the through-holes 451a and 451b, the first cover 45 may include one or more of recesses to have the bosses 621a and/or 621b inserted thereinto.

As shown in FIGS. 6 and 7, the holder 62 includes a first end portion 710 and a second end portion 720. The first end portion 710 is one end portion of the holder 62 in the first direction. The second end portion 720 is another end portion of the holder 62 in the first direction. The first end portion 710 is movable relative to the second end portion 720 in the first direction. More specifically, the holder 62 of the present embodiment includes a first holder member 71, a second holder member 72, and a coil spring 73 positioned between the first holder member 71 and the second holder member 72. The first holder member 71 is made of resin, for example. The second holder member 72 is made of resin, for example. The first holder member 71 includes the first end portion 710. An outer surface of the first holder member 71

11

includes a holding surface 620. The IC chip 61 is fixed to the holding surface 620. The second holder member 72 includes the second end portion 720. After assembling the first holder member 71, the second holder member 72 and the coil spring 73 as the holder 62, the first end portion 710 and the second end portion 720 are separated from each other in the first direction.

The coil spring 73 is an elastic member extending in the first direction. The coil spring 73 is positioned between the first end portion 710 and the second end portion 720 in the first direction. The coil spring 73 can be stretched or compressed in the first direction at least between a first state and a second state more compressed than the first state. The coil spring 73 in the first state has a length in the first direction longer than a length of the coil spring 73 in the second state in the first direction. Therefore, a distance between the first end portion 710 and the second end portion 720 in the first direction in the first state is longer than a distance between the first end portion 710 and the second end portion 720 in the first direction in the second state. At least, the coil spring 73 in the second state has a length in the first direction shorter than a natural length of the coil spring 73.

As shown in FIGS. 6 and 7, the first holder member 71 includes a pawl 714a and a pawl 714b. The pawl 714a and the pawl 714b respectively protrude from the first holder member 71 in a direction crossing the first direction. The second holder member 72 has an opening 721a and an opening 721b. The pawl 714a is inserted into the opening 721a. The pawl 714b is inserted into the opening 721b. In the first state, the pawl 714a is in contact with the second holder member 72 at a periphery of the opening 721a on a side of the first end portion 710 in the first direction. Also, in the first state, the pawl 714b is in contact with the second holder member 72 at a periphery of the opening 721b on a side of the first end portion 710 in the first direction. With this structure, the length of the coil spring 73 in the first direction is prevented from getting further longer than the length of the coil spring 73 in the first state. Further, the first holder member 71 cannot be detached from the second holder member 72 easily. On the other hand, in the second state, the pawl 714a is separated from the periphery of the opening 721a on the side of the first end portion 710 in the first direction, and pawl 714b is separated from the periphery of the opening 721b on the side of the first end portion 710 in the first direction.

Instead of opening 721a and the opening 721b, one or more of recesses or one or more of steps which is capable of contacting the pawl 714a and the pawl 714b respectively may be provided. Alternatively, the first holder member 71 may have one or more of openings or one or more of recesses or one or more of steps, whereas the second holder member 72 may include one or more of pawls.

Due to the difference in dimension between the through-hole 451 and boss 621 and stretch and compression of the coil spring 73 described above, the holding surface 620 of the holder 62 can move in the first direction relative to the casing 10. Hereinafter, the position of the holding surface 620 in the first direction relative to the casing 10 will be referred to as an "initial position." Before attaching the developing cartridge 1 to the drawer unit 90, the holding surface 620 is in the initial position. Further, the position of the holding surface 620 in the first direction relative to the casing 10 at a moment when the coil spring 73 is most compressed during attaching the developing cartridge 1 to the drawer unit 90 will be referred to as an "intermediate position." Further, the position of the holding surface 620 in

12

the first direction relative to the casing 10 when the electric contact surface 611 make contact with an electric connector 913 described later will be referred to as a "contact position." And the position of the holding surface 620 in the first direction relative to the casing 10 after attaching the developing cartridge 1 to the drawer unit 90 has been completed will be referred to as a "final position."

The outer surface of the first end portion 710 further includes a first guide surface 711 (an example of a first surface), a second guide surface 712 (an example of second surface), and third guide surfaces 713a and 713b (an example of a third surface), in addition to the holding surface 620 described above.

The first guide surface 711 is positioned at one side of the holding surface 620 in the second direction which is closer to the developing roller 30 than another side of the holding surface 620 in the second direction. The first guide surface 711 is inclined relative to the electric contact surface 611 of the IC chip 61 held by the holding surface 620. Specifically, the first guide surface 711 is inclined at an acute angle relative to the electric contact surface 611.

Here, one end of the first end portion 710 in the second direction will be defined as a first outer end position 711a (third position). One end of the holding surface 620 in the second direction is defined as a first inner end position 711b (fourth position). As illustrated in FIG. 7, the first guide surface 711 extends from the first outer end position 711a to the first inner end position 711b toward the electric contact surface 611. The first outer end position 711a is farther away from the electric contact surface 611 than the first inner end position 711b both in the first direction and the second direction. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 7, the distance d1 between the first outer end position 711a and first inner end position 711b in the first direction is greater than the distance d2 between the electric contact surface 611 and first inner end position 711b in the first direction.

The second guide surface 712 is positioned at one side of the holding surface 620 in the second direction which is farther from the developing roller 30 than another side of the holding surface 620 in the second direction. The second guide surface 712 is inclined relative to the electric contact surface 611 of the IC chip 61 held by the holding surface 620. Specifically, the second guide surface 712 is inclined at an acute angle relative to the electric contact surface 611.

Here, another end of the first end portion 710 in the second direction will be defined as a second outer end position 712a (fifth position). Another end of the holding surface 620 in the second direction is defined as a second inner end position 712b (sixth position). As illustrated in FIG. 7, the second guide surface 712 extends from the second outer end position 712a to the second inner end position 712b toward the electric contact surface 611. The second outer end position 712a is farther away from the electric contact surface 611 than the second inner end position 712b both in the first direction and the second direction. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 7, the distance d3 between the second outer end position 712a and second inner end position 712b in the first direction is greater than the distance d4 between the electric contact surface 611 and second inner end position 712b in the first direction.

The third guide surface 713a is positioned at one side of the electric contact surface 611 in the third direction. The third guide surface 713b is positioned at another side of the electric contact surface 611 in the third direction. The third guide surfaces 713a, 713b extend in the second direction respectively. Each of the third guide surfaces 713a, 713b is farther away from the coil spring 73 than the electric contact

13

surface 611 in the first direction. Therefore, the electric contact surface 611 is positioned at a recessed area which is recessed toward the coil spring 73 side relative to the third guide surfaces 713a, 713b.

Each of the first guide surface 711, second guide surface 712, and third guide surfaces 713a, 713b may be planar or curved. However, it is preferable that each of the first guide surface 711, second guide surface 712, and third guide surfaces 713a, 713b is a smooth surface without one or more steps so that each of the first guide surface 711, second guide surface 712, and third guide surfaces 713a, 713b does not hook a portion of the drawer unit 90 when the developing cartridge 1 is attached to the drawer unit 90.

3. Attaching Operation

Subsequently, operation when each developing cartridge 1 is attached to the drawer unit 90 will be described. FIGS. 8 through 14 respectively illustrate how the developing cartridge 1 is attached to one of the cartridge holding portions 91 of the drawer unit 90.

When the developing cartridge 1 is attached to the cartridge holding portion 91, as illustrated in FIG. 8, the developing roller 30 of the developing cartridge 1 first faces an insertion opening 910 of the cartridge holding portion 91. At this time, the first end portion 710 of the holder 720 and second end portion 720 of the holder 62 are not in contact with the drawer unit 90. Thus, the coil spring 73 is in the first state described above. The position of the holding surface 620 with respect to the casing 10 in the first direction is the initial position described above. The developing cartridge 1 is inserted into the cartridge holding portion 91 in the second direction, as shown by a dashed arrow illustrated in FIG. 8.

The cartridge holding portion 91 includes a first guide plate 911 and a second guide plate 912. The first guide plate 911 is spaced apart from the second guide plate 912 in the first direction and the first guide plate 911 and the second guide plate 912 face each other. Each of the first guide plate 911 and second guide plate 912 extends along both the second direction and the third direction. The first guide plate 911 includes an electric connector 913 made of metal. The electric connector 913 is contactable with the electric contact surface 611 of the IC chip 61. The electric connector 913 protrudes from the surface of the first guide plate 911 toward the second guide plate 912 in the first direction.

When the developing cartridge 1 is inserted into the cartridge holding portion 91, the first guide surface 711 of the holder 62 contacts the end of the first guide plate 911 in the second direction, as illustrated in FIG. 9. Then, the first guide plate 911 presses the first guide surface 711, thereby the holder 62 moves in the first direction. At this time, the movement of the holder 62 is relative movement with respect to the casing 10. As a result, the holder 62 is positioned between the first guide plate 911 and second guide plate 912 in the first direction, as illustrated in FIG. 10.

The first end portion 710 of the first holder member 71 then contacts the first guide plate 911. The second end portion 720 of the second holder member 72 also contacts the second guide plate 912. The coil spring 73 is more compressed in the first direction than the first state.

As illustrated in FIG. 11, the first guide plate 911 includes a guide protrusion 914 protruding toward the second guide plate 912. The guide protrusion 914 is positioned closer to the insertion opening 910 than the electric connector 913. The guide protrusion 914 includes a first inclined surface 915. The second guide plate 912 also includes a second inclined surface 916. The distance between the first inclined surface 915 and second inclined surface 916 in the first

14

direction becomes gradually smaller toward the inserting direction of the developing cartridge 1.

When the developing cartridge 1 is further inserted in the second direction, the first holder member 71 contacts the first inclined surface 915 and the second holder member 72 contacts the second inclined surface 916. As a result, the first holder member 71 and second holder member 72 become closer to each other in the first direction and the length of the coil spring 73 in the first direction becomes shorter gradually. When each of the third guide surfaces 713a, 713b of the first holder member 71 contacts the top portion of the guide protrusion 914, the length of the coil spring 73 in the first direction becomes shortest. That is, a length of the coil spring 73 in the first direction becomes a shortest state, and a length of the coil spring 73 in the shortest state is shorter than a length of the coil spring 73 in the second state described above. The position of the holding surface 620 relative to the casing 10 in the first direction is the intermediate position described above.

As described above, the IC chip assembly 60 can change the position of the holding surface 620 in the first direction when the developing cartridge 1 is inserted into the drawer unit 90. As a result, the developing cartridge 1 can be inserted into the drawer unit 90 by changing the position of the holding surface 620 in the first direction along the guide protrusion 914. Therefore, the developing cartridge 1 can be inserted into the drawer unit 90 with suppressing friction of the electric contact surface 611 of the IC chip 61. In addition, as illustrated FIGS. 10, 11, and 12, the electric contact surface 611 directly contacts the electric connector 913 after the first guide surface 711 moves over the guide protrusion 914. As a result, friction of the electric connector 913 can be reduced.

In particular, in the developing cartridge 1 according to the present embodiment, the electric contact surface 611 of the IC chip 61 is positioned at a recessed area which is recessed relative to the third guide surfaces 713a, 713b. As a result, the top portion of the guide protrusion 914 contacts only the third guide surfaces 713a, 713b but does not contact the electric contact surface 611 in the state illustrated in FIG. 11. Therefore, friction of the guide protrusion 914 against the electric contact surface 611 can be prevented.

When the developing cartridge 1 is further inserted into the second direction, the third guide surfaces 713a, 713b pass the guide protrusion 914. The second guide surface 712 then contacts the guide protrusion 914 as illustrated in FIG. 12. With such contact, the coil spring 73 stretches again from the shortest state to the second state described above. As a result, the electric contact surface 611 of the IC chip 61 contacts the electric connector 913 as illustrated in FIG. 13. The length in the first direction of the coil spring 73 in the second state is shorter than the length of the coil spring 73 in the first state and the length in the first direction of the coil spring 73 in the second state is longer than the length of the coil spring 73 in the shortest state. In addition, the length in the first direction of the coil spring 73 in the second state is shorter than the natural length of the coil spring 73. The relative position of the holding surface 620 with respect to the casing 10 in the first direction corresponds to the contact position described above.

Consequently, the IC chip assembly 60 is fixed in a state where the IC chip assembly 60 is nipped between the electric connector 913 and second guide plate 912. In the present embodiment, the casing 10 is then inclined in the first direction as shown by a dashed arrow illustrated in FIG. 14. As a result, the developing roller 30 contacts the photosensitive drum 92 in the drawer unit 90. At this time, the

15

position of the holding surface **620** relative to the casing **10** in the first direction changes from the contact position to the final position described above. The boss **621a** moves inside of the through-hole **451a** in the first direction and the boss **621b** moves inside of the through-hole **451b** in the third direction. As a result, the boss **621a** is not in contact with the edge of the through-hole **451a** of the first cover **45**, and the boss **621b** is not in contact with the edge of the through-hole **451b** of the first cover **45**. Thus, the IC chip assembly **60** and first cover **45** are not in contact with each other. Accordingly, oscillation of the drive unit such as the first gear portion **40** and the like is difficult to be transmitted to the IC chip assembly **60** when the image forming apparatus executes the print process. Therefore, the contact state of the electric contact surface **611** and electric connector **913** can be sufficiently maintained.

4. Separating Operation

After the developing cartridge **1** is attached to the drawer unit **90**, the drawer unit **90** can perform a “separating operation” in which the developing roller **30** is temporarily separated from the photosensitive drum **92**. As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the first cover **45** of the developing cartridge **1** includes a first columnar protrusion **46** extending in the third direction. As illustrated in FIG. **3**, the second cover **54** of the developing cartridge **1** includes a second columnar protrusion **55** extending in the third direction. As illustrated in FIG. **1**, the drawer unit **90** includes a pressure member **93**. The pressure member **93** is positioned at one side portion of the cartridge holding portion **91** in the third direction, and another pressure member (not shown in the FIG. **1**) is positioned at another side portion of the cartridge holding portion **91** in the third direction. The other pressure member has same structures of the pressure member **93** and same functions of the pressure member **93**. Each of four cartridge holding portions **91** includes the pressure member **93** and the other pressure member.

In the motion indicated by the dashed arrow in FIG. **14**, the pressure member **93** presses the first columnar protrusion **46** and the other pressure member **93** presses the second columnar protrusion **55** in the same manner as the pressure member **93** presses the first columnar protrusion **46** as shown in FIG. **14**, and the casing **10** is thus inclined in the first direction. Accordingly, the position of the holding surface **620** in the first direction relative to the casing **10** is changed from the contact position to the final position, described above.

FIG. **15** illustrates the developing cartridge **1** in the separating operation. During the separating operation, the driving force from the image forming apparatus changes the positions of the first columnar protrusion **46** and the second columnar protrusion **55**. Specifically, the lever of the drawer unit **90** (not illustrated) presses each of the first columnar protrusion **46** and the second columnar protrusion **55**, and each of the first columnar protrusion **46** and the second columnar protrusion **55** thus moves against the pressing force of the pressure member **93**. Consequently, as shown by a dashed arrow illustrated in FIG. **15**, the casing **10** and the developing roller **30** of the developing cartridge **1** move in the second direction so as to separate away from the photosensitive drum **92**.

Meanwhile, the IC chip assembly **60** is fixed in a state where the IC chip assembly **60** is nipped between the electric connector **913** and the second guide plate **912**. Accordingly, the position of the IC chip assembly **60** is not changed relative to the drawer unit **90**, when the casing **10** and the developing roller **30** move in the second direction so that the developing roller **30** is separated from the photosensitive

16

drum **92**. Further, the state of the coil spring **73** does not change from the second state. As a result, the position of the holder **62** relative to the casing **10** in the second direction changes from a standard position (first position) to a separation position (second position). The boss **621a** then moves inside of the through-hole **451a** in the second direction and the boss **621b** then moves inside of the through-hole **451b** in the second direction.

As described above, the developing cartridge **1** can change the position of the casing **10** relative to the drawer unit **90** in the second direction, without changing the position of the electric contact surface **611** in the second direction relative to the drawer unit **90**. Accordingly, the developing cartridge **1** can maintain the contacting state between the electric contact surface **611** and the electric connector **913** during the separating operation. The contacting state between the electric contact surface **611** and the electric connector **913** can also be maintained during the shipment of the image forming apparatus in which the developing cartridge **1** is attached to the drawer unit **90**. Accordingly, abrasion or wear of the electric contact surface **611** can be suppressed.

5. Modifications

While the description has been made in detail with reference to the specific embodiment thereof, it would be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the above described embodiment. In the following description, differences between the above embodiment and the modifications are mainly explained.

5-1. First Modification

In the following a first modification of the main embodiment is discussed. Due to the many similarities between the first modification and the main embodiment only differences between the main embodiment and the first modification will be discussed. With regard to all other features reference is made to the discussion of the main embodiment above. FIG. **16** is a partial exploded perspective view of the developing cartridge **1A** according to a first modification. In the first modification, at least a portion of the holder **62A** holding the IC chip **61A** is covered by the first cover **45A**, as illustrated in FIG. **16**. As illustrated in FIG. **16**, the first cover **45A** includes a boss **451aA** and a boss **451bA**. The boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** are arrayed in the second direction. Each of the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** extends from the first cover **45A** toward the casing **10A** in the third direction. The holder **62A** has a through-hole **621A** that penetrates the holder **62A** in the third direction. Both of the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** are inserted in the through-hole **621A**.

The boss **451aA** includes one edge of the boss **451aA** and another edge of the boss **451aA** in the second direction, and the boss **451bA** includes one edge of the boss **451bA** facing the other edge of the boss **451aA** in the second direction and another edge of the boss **451bA** in the second direction. The through-hole **621A** has a dimension in the second direction greater than the distance between the one edge of the boss **451aA** and the other edge of the boss **451bA** in the second direction. Specifically, the distance between the one edge of the boss **451aA** and the other edge of the boss **451bA** in the second direction is the longest distance the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** in the second direction, and the dimension of the through-hole **621A** in the second direction is greater than the longest distance. The holder **62A** can move together with the through-hole **621A** in the second direction relative to both the casing **10A** and the first cover **45A**. When the holder **62A** moves in the second direction, the IC chip **61A**

17

having the electric contact surface **611A** moves in the second direction together with the holder **62A**.

The dimension of the through-hole **621A** in the first direction is greater than each dimension of the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** in the first direction. Accordingly, the holder **62A**, can move together with the through-hole **621A** in the first direction relative to both the casing **10A** and the first cover **45A**. When the holder **62A** moves in the first direction, the IC chip **61A** having the electric contact surface **611A** moves in the first direction together with the holder **62A**. The holder **62A** may be movable in the third direction between the first cover **45A** and the first outer surface **11A**.

As described above, the first cover **45A** may include the boss **451aA** and boss **451bA**, and the holder **62A** may have the through-hole **621A**, so that the electric contact surface **611** can move relative to the casing **10A** in the first and second directions. In accordance with the configuration, the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** can be moved in the first direction inside of the through-hole **621A** when the casing **10A** is inclined in the first direction during the attachment of the developing cartridge **1A** to the drawer unit **90**. When the separating operation is performed after the developing cartridge **1A** is attached to the drawer unit **90**, the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** can move in the second direction inside of the through-hole **621A**. As a result, the position of the casing **10A** can be changed in a state where the contact state of the electric contact surface **611A** and the electric connector is satisfactorily maintained.

Instead of the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA**, the number of the bosses may be one, or more than or equal to three. The number of the through-holes **621A** formed on the holder **62A** may be more than or equal to two. Instead of the through-hole **621A**, the holder **62A** may have a recessed portion in which the boss **451aA** and the boss **45bA** can be inserted. Further, the first outer surface of the casing may have a boss and the holder has the through-hole or the recessed portion through which the boss of the casing is inserted. Each of the boss **451aA** and the boss **451bA** may have either a cylindrical shape or a prism shape.

FIG. **17** is a cross-sectional view of the IC chip assembly **60A** indicated in FIG. **16** taken along a plane orthogonal to the third direction. As illustrated in FIG. **17**, the holder **62A** of the IC chip assembly **60A** includes a holder member **74A** made of resin and a leaf spring **75A** fixed to the holder member **74A**. The holder member **74A** includes a first end portion **740A** that is positioned at one end portion of the holder **62A** in the first direction. The IC chip **61A** is fixed to the holding surface **620A** that is portion of the outer surface of the first end portion **740A**. The leaf spring **75A** includes a second end portion **750A** that is positioned at the other end portion of the holder **62A** in the first direction. The first end portion **740A** and the second end portion **750A** are separated from each other in the first direction in the assembled holder **62A**.

The leaf spring **75A** is made of a bent elastic metal plate, for example. The leaf spring **75A** can be stretched or compressed in the first direction between a first state, and a second state in which the leaf spring **75A** is bent more than in the first state. The length in the first direction of the leaf spring **75A** in the first state is larger than the length in the first direction of the leaf spring **75A** in the second state. That is, the distance in the first direction between the first end portion **740A** and the second end portion **750A** in the first state is longer than the distance in the first direction between the first end portion **740A** and the second end portion **750A** in the second state. The length in the first direction of the leaf

18

spring **75A** in the second state is smaller than the natural length of the leaf spring **75A**.

As described above, instead of the coil spring, the leaf spring **75A** may be used so that the IC chip assembly **60A** can be stretched or compressed in the first direction. Further, as described above, the dimensional difference between the boss **451aA** and the through-hole **621A**, the dimensional difference between the boss **451bA** and the through-hole **621A** and stretch and compression of the leaf spring **75A** enable the electric contact surface **611A** to move in the first direction relative to the casing **10A**, when the developing cartridge **1A** is being attached to the drawer unit **90**.

5-2. Second Modification

In the following, a second modification of the main embodiment is discussed. Due to the many similarities between the second modification and the main embodiment only differences between the main embodiment and the second modification will be discussed. With regard to all other features reference is made to the discussion of the main embodiment above. FIG. **18** is a partial perspective view illustrating a developing cartridge **1B** according to a second modification. In the second modification depicted in FIG. **18**, the electric contact surface **611B** of an IC chip **61B** is oriented to face in the third direction. Accordingly, in the second modification, the first direction orthogonal to the electric contact surface **611B** is the same direction as the third direction. In the second modification depicted in FIG. **18**, a columnar elastic body **63B** is positioned between a casing **10B** and an IC chip assembly **60B**. As the columnar elastic body **63B**, for example, a coil spring extending in the first direction may be used. The columnar elastic body **63B** includes one end portion in the third direction, and the one end portion is fixed to a holder **62B** of the IC chip assembly **60B**. The columnar elastic body **63B** includes another end portion in the third direction, and the other end portion is fixed to a first outer surface of the casing **10B**. That is, the casing **10B** and the IC chip assembly **60B** are connected to each other by the columnar elastic body **63B**.

FIGS. **19** and **20** are explanatory diagrams illustrating movement of the IC chip assembly **60B** in accordance with deformation of the columnar elastic body **63B**. As illustrated in FIG. **19**, the columnar elastic body **63B** is capable of being stretched or compressed in the first direction. As the columnar elastic body **63B** is stretched or compressed, the position of the electric contact surface **611B** relative to the casing **10B** in the first direction also changes. Further, as illustrated in FIG. **20**, the columnar elastic body **63B** can deform in a direction diagonal to the first direction. As the columnar elastic body **63B** diagonally deforms, the position of the one end of the columnar elastic body **63B** also changes relative to another end of the columnar elastic body **63B** in a direction perpendicular to the first direction.

FIGS. **21** and **22** are explanatory diagrams illustrating how the developing cartridge **1B** according to the second modification is attached to a drawer unit **90B**. As illustrated in FIGS. **21** and **22**, a first cover **45B** includes a first frame portion **456B** and a second frame portion **457B**, and the first frame portion **456B** and the second frame portion **457B** are arranged with a gap between the first frame portion **456B** and the second frame portion **457B** in the second direction. The IC chip assembly **60B** and the columnar elastic body **63B** are accommodated in an accommodating portion **452B** which defines a space between the first frame portion **456B** and the second frame portion **457B**. The first cover **45B** further includes a pawl **453B** protruding from the first frame portion **456B** toward the accommodating portion **452B**. As illustrated in FIG. **21**, before the developing cartridge **1B** is

19

attached to the drawer unit 90B, a portion of the IC chip assembly 60 is in contact with the pawl 453B. Hence, the columnar elastic body 63B is maintained in a more compressed state than the natural length of the columnar elastic body 63B in the first direction.

When the developing cartridge 1B has been attached to the drawer unit 90B, as illustrated in FIG. 22, the electric contact surface 611B of the IC chip 61B contacts an electric connector 913B. In this state, a length of the columnar elastic body 63B in the first direction is shorter than the length in the first direction of the columnar elastic body 63B in the compressed state illustrated in FIG. 21. Thus, due to a repulsion force of the columnar elastic body 63B, a contact state between the electric contact surface 611B and the electric connector 913B is maintained.

FIG. 23 is an explanatory diagram illustrating a state where the separating operation is performed after the developing cartridge 1B is attached to the drawer unit 90B. When the separating operation is performed, as illustrated in FIG. 23, the columnar elastic body 63B is deformed diagonally with respect to the first direction. Thus, the IC chip assembly 60B connected to the one end of the columnar elastic body 63B moves in the second direction relative to the casing 10B connected to the other end of the columnar elastic body 63B. Thus, the position of the casing 10B in the second direction can be changed without changing the position of the electric contact surface 611B in the second direction relative to the drawer unit 90B. That is, the separating operation can be performed in a state where the contact state between the electric contact surface 611B and the electric connector 913B is maintained.

5-3. Third Modification

In the following, a third modification of the main embodiment is discussed. Due to the many similarities between the third modification and the main embodiment only differences between the main embodiment and the third modification will be discussed. With regard to all other features, reference is made to the discussion of the main embodiment above. FIG. 24 is a perspective view of a developing cartridge 1C according to a third modification. In the third modification depicted in FIG. 24, an IC chip assembly 60C includes an IC chip 61C, a holder 62C, a shaft portion 66C, and a lever 67C. The shaft portion 66C extends in the second direction within a first cover 45C. The shaft portion 66C includes one end portion in the second direction, and the one end portion of the shaft portion 66C is mounted to the holder 62C so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the holder 62C. The shaft portion 66C includes other end portion in the second direction, and the another end portion is mounted to the lever 67C positioned outside the first cover 45C so as to be incapable of rotating relative to the lever 67C. Accordingly, as the lever 67C pivots about the shaft portion 66C as indicated by a dashed line arrow depicted in FIG. 24, the shaft portion 66C and the holder 62C also pivots about the shaft portion 66C. In the third modification, the third direction orthogonal to the electric contact surface 611C of the IC chip 61C is the same direction as the first direction. Accordingly, a position of the holder 62C in the first direction is changed.

FIGS. 25 through 27 are views of the developing cartridge 1C according to the third modification as viewed in the third direction. Before the developing cartridge 1C is attached to the drawer unit, as illustrated in FIGS. 24 and 25, the IC chip 61C and the holder 62C are accommodated inside the first cover 45C. When the developing cartridge 1C is attached to the drawer unit and then the drawer unit is accommodated in the image forming apparatus, the lever 67C pivots about the

20

shaft portion 66C. As a result, a portion of the holder 62C and the IC chip 61C protrude from the first cover 45C. Further, as illustrated in FIG. 27, the electric contact surface 611C of the IC chip 61C are in contact with an electric connector 913C of the drawer unit.

The lever 67C may be manually operated by a user after the developing cartridge 1C is attached to the drawer unit. Alternatively, the lever 67C may be pivoted by a guide surface provided at a main body of the image forming apparatus when the drawer unit is attached into the main body of the image forming apparatus.

The first cover 45C includes a support surface 454C that can contact the lever 67C before the lever 67C pivots. In a state depicted in FIG. 25, one surface of the lever 67C in the second direction is in contact with the support surface 454C. Accordingly, the lever 67C, the shaft portion 66C, the holder 62C and the IC chip 61C as a whole are supported by the first cover 45C in the second direction. However, as illustrated in FIG. 26, as the lever 67C pivots, the lever 67C moves outside the support surface 454C. Accordingly, the one surface of the lever 67C in the second direction and the support surface 454C are not in contact with each other. Further, the holder 62C is held at a position depicted in FIG. 26, by a positioning member of the drawer unit. As a result, a state in which the electric contact surface 611C of the IC chip 61C and the electric connector 913C are in contact with each other is maintained.

Further, in the state depicted in FIG. 26, the one surface of the holder 62C in the second direction is not in contact with the first cover 45C. Accordingly, the lever 67C, the shaft portion 66C, the holder 62C and the IC chip 61C as a whole can move relative to the first cover 45C in the second direction. Consequently, as illustrated in FIG. 27, when the separating operation is performed, the casing 10C and the first cover 45C can move in the second direction in a state where the contact state between the electric contact surface 611C of the IC chip 61C and the electric connector 913C is maintained.

5-4. Fourth Modification

In the following, a fourth modification of the main embodiment is discussed. Due to the many similarities between the fourth modification and the main embodiment only differences between the main embodiment and the fourth modification will be discussed. With regard to all other features, reference is made to the discussion of the main embodiment above. FIG. 28 is an exploded perspective view illustrating a first cover 45D and an IC chip assembly 60D of the developing cartridge according to a fourth modification. FIG. 29 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the first cover 45D and the IC chip assembly 60D. In the fourth modification depicted in FIGS. 28 and 29, the electric contact surface 611D of the IC chip 61D are oriented to face in the third direction. Accordingly, the first direction orthogonal to the electric contact surfaces 611D is the same direction as the third direction.

As illustrated in FIGS. 28 and 29, the IC chip assembly 60D according to the fourth modification includes the IC chip 61D, the holder 62D holding the IC chip 61D, and a joint member 63D. The holder 62D includes a plurality of pawls 622D, and each of the plurality of pawls 622D extends away from the electric contact surfaces 611D in the first direction. In the fourth modification depicted in FIG. 28, the holder 62D has four pawls 622D. The joint member 63D includes a fixing portion 631D fixed to the first cover 45D, and an arm 632D extending from the fixing portion 631D toward the holder 62D in the first direction.

21

The arm 632D includes a distal end in the first direction, and a spherical portion 633D whose diameter is larger than a thickness of the arm 632D. The spherical portion 633D is positioned at the distal end of the arm 632D. The spherical portion 633D is held at a position inside of the holder 62D by the plurality of pawls 622D. With this configuration, as illustrated in FIG. 30, the arm 632D and the holder 62D are connected to each other so as to be rotatable relative to each other. That is, the IC chip 61D and the holder 62D are rotatable relative to each other about the spherical portion 633D. Accordingly, the position of the electric contact surfaces 611D of the IC chip 61D relative to the fixing portion 631D can be moved in the second direction. Therefore, when the separating operation of the developing cartridge is performed, the casing and the first cover 45D can move in the second direction in a state where the contact state between the electric contact surfaces 611D of the IC chip 61D and the electric connector is maintained.

Further, with the configuration depicted in FIGS. 28 through 30, the plurality of pawls 622D of the holder 62D and the arm 632D of the joint member 63D are movable relative to each other in the first direction. Thus, when the developing cartridge is inserted into the drawer unit, the IC chip 61D and the holder 62D can move relative to the fixing portion 631D in the first direction. Accordingly, the developing cartridge can be inserted, while the electric contact surfaces 611D of the IC chip 61D can be suppressed from being rubbed.

An elastic member such as a coil spring being stretched or compressed in the first direction may be positioned between the fixing portion 631D of the joint member 63D and the plurality of pawls 622D. An elastic member such as a coil spring being stretched or compressed in the first direction may be positioned between the first cover 45D and the plurality of pawls 622D. Accordingly, a repulsion force by the elastic member allows the electric contact surface 611D to reliably contact the electric connector.

Further, the arm 632D may be rotatably connected to the fixing portion 631D or the first cover 45D. For example, the arm 632D includes one spherical portion at one end of the arm 632D and another spherical portion at another end of the arm 632D. Either the one spherical portion or the other spherical portion may be rotatably held by a plurality of pawls of the first cover 45D. In this manner, when both ends of the arm 632D are rotatably connected, the position of the electric contact surface 611D in the second direction may be changed more flexibly.

5-5. Fifth Modification

In the following, a fifth modification of the main embodiment is discussed. Due to the many similarities between the fifth modification and the main embodiment only differences between the main embodiment and the fifth modification will be discussed. With regard to all other features, reference is made to the discussion of the main embodiment above. FIG. 31 is a partial perspective view of a developing cartridge 1E of the fifth modification. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 31, the holder 62E holding the IC chip 61E has a plate shape which has been deformed in a circular manner and whose ends are connected to each other. The holder 62E is made of a flexible resin, for example. Accordingly, in the embodiment shown in FIG. 31, the holder 62E itself is an elastic member which is stretched or compressed in the first direction. With this structure, a distance between both ends of the holder 62E in the first direction is changeable. Accordingly, when the developing cartridge 1E is inserted into the drawer unit, abrasion or wear of the electric contact surface 611E of the IC chip 61E can be suppressed.

22

In the embodiment shown in FIG. 31, the holder 62E is not necessarily configured by a plurality of members due to stretch and compression of the holder 62E in the first direction. The holder 62E is not necessarily comprised by an elastic member which is different from the member for holding the IC chip 61E.

FIG. 32 is an exploded perspective view showing a first cover 45E and an IC chip assembly 60E of the fifth modification. As shown in FIG. 32, the first cover 45E includes a boss 451aE extending in the third direction and a boss 451bE extending in the third direction. The boss 451aE and the boss 451bE are aligned in the second direction. And, the first cover 45E includes a connecting portion 455E which connects a top of the boss 451aE and a top of the boss 451bE to each other.

The holder 62E extends in a ring shape surrounding the boss 451aE and the boss 451bE. And one pawl 623E positioned at one end of the holder 62E and another pawl 623E positioned at another end of the holder 62E are engaged with each other. Accordingly, a through-hole 621E is positioned at the inside of the holder 62E and the through-hole 621E penetrates through the holder 62E in the third direction. The boss 451aE and the boss 451bE are positioned inside of the through-hole 621E. The holder 62E further includes a plate portion 624E protruding from an inner surface of the holder 62E toward the through-hole 621E. The plate portion 624E is inserted between the boss 451aE and the boss 451bE.

The distance between the boss 451aE and the boss 451bE in the second direction is greater than the thickness of the plate portion 624E in the second direction. Therefore, the holder 62E is able to relatively move together with the plate portion 624E with respect to the casing 10E and the first cover 45E in the second direction. When the holder 62E moves in the second direction, the IC chip 61E having the electric contact surface 611E moves together with the holder 62E in the second direction.

The size of the through-hole 621E in the first direction is greater than the sizes of each of the boss 451aE and the boss 451bE in the first direction. Therefore, the holder 62E is movable with respect to the casing 10E and the first cover 45E in the first direction. When the holder 62E moves in the first direction, the IC chip 61E having the electric contact surface 611E moves together with the holder 62E in the first direction.

When the developing cartridge 1E is attached to the drawer unit, the holder 62E is nipped by the guide plates of the drawer unit and the holder 62E is compressed in the first direction. Specifically, when the one pawl 623E and the other pawl 623E approach each other, an urging force exerting in the direction to separate the one pawl 623E and the other pawl 623E from each other is generated. The electric contact surface 611E of the IC chip 61E is in contact with the electric connector in a state where the holder 62E is elastically deformed. The electric contact surface 611E is fixed to the electric connector due to the urging force in a state where the electric contact surface 611E is in contact with the electric connector. And, in the separating operation, the casing 10E moves in the second direction in a state where the contact between the electric contact surface 611E and the electric connector is maintained.

With the above configuration, when the developing cartridge 1E is attached to the drawer unit and the casing 10E is inclined in the first direction, the boss 451aE and the boss 451bE are able to move in the first direction inside the through-hole 621E. After the developing cartridge 1E is attached to the drawer unit and the separating operation is

23

performed, the boss **451aE** and the boss **451bE** are able to move in the second direction inside the through-hole **621E**. As a result, the position of the casing **10E** can be changed in a state where the contact condition between the electric contact surface **611E** and the electric connector is maintained in a good manner.

The number of the bosses provided at the first cover **45E** may be one, two, three or more than three.

5-6. Sixth Modification

In the following, a sixth modification of the main embodiment is discussed. Due to the many similarities between the sixth modification and the main embodiment only differences between the main embodiment and the sixth modification will be discussed. With regard to all other features, reference is made to the discussion of the main embodiment above. FIG. **33** is a perspective view showing a developing cartridge **1F** and a drum cartridge **80F** of the sixth modification. The developing cartridge **1F** shown in FIG. **33** includes a casing **10F**, a developing roller **30F**, an IC chip assembly **60F**, and a first cover **45F**. In the embodiment shown in FIG. **33**, the developing cartridge **1F** is attached to the drum cartridge **80F** instead of the drawer unit. The drum cartridge **80F** includes one developing cartridge holding portion **81F** holding the developing cartridge **1F**. The developing cartridge holding portion **81F** includes a photosensitive drum **82F**. When the developing cartridge **1F** is attached to the drum cartridge **80F**, the developing roller **30F** of the developing cartridge **1F** is in contact with the photosensitive drum **82F**.

FIG. **34** is a view showing how to attach the drum cartridge **80F** to an image forming apparatus **100F** in a state where the developing cartridge **1F** is attached to the drum cartridge **80F**. As shown in FIG. **34**, the drum cartridge **80F** is attached to a drum cartridge holding portion **101F** provided in the image forming apparatus **100F** in a state where the developing cartridge **1F** is attached to the drum cartridge **80F**.

In the above manner, the similar structure to that of the IC chip assemblies according to the above embodiment or the first to fifth modifications respectively can be applied to the developing cartridge **1F** to be attached to the drum cartridge **80F**. FIG. **35** is an exploded perspective view showing a detail of the IC chip assembly **60F** of the developing cartridge **1F**. As shown in FIG. **35**, the IC chip assembly **60F** of the developing cartridge **1F** includes an IC chip **61F** as a storage medium and a holder **62F** holding the IC chip **61F**. The first cover holds the holder **62F** at a side of the casing **10F** in the third direction.

The holder **62F** includes a first holder member **71F**, a second holder member **72F**, and a coil spring **73F**. The coil spring **73F** is an elastic member that can be stretched or compressed in the first direction.

The first holder member **71F** includes a boss **621aF**, a boss **621bF**, and a boss **621cF**. The boss **621aF** extends in the third direction toward the first cover **45F** from a certain surface of the first holder member **71F**, and the certain surface faces the first cover **45F**. On the other hand, the first cover **45F** has a through-hole **451F**. The through-hole **451F** penetrates through the first cover **45F** in the third direction. The boss **621aF** is inserted through the through-hole **451F**.

Each of the boss **621bF** and the boss **621cF** extends in the third direction toward the casing **10F** from a certain surface of the first holder member **71F**, and the certain surface faces casing **10F**. On the other hand, the casing **10F** includes a recessed portion **15aF** and a recessed portion **15bF**. Each of the recessed portion **15aF** and the recessed portion **15bF** is recessed from the first outer surface **11F** of the casing **10F**

24

in the third direction. The boss **621bF** is inserted through the recessed portion **15aF**. The boss **621cF** is inserted through the recessed portion **15bF**.

The through-hole **451F** has a size (inner dimension) in the second direction greater than a size (outer dimension) of the boss **621aF** in the second direction. The recessed portion **15aF** has a size (inner dimension) in the second direction greater than a size (outer dimension) of the boss **621bF** in the second direction. Further, the recessed portion **15bF** has a size (inner dimension) in the second direction greater than a size (outer dimension) of the boss **621cF** in the second direction. Hence, the holder **62F** can move in the second direction relative to the casing **10F** and the first cover **45F**, together with the bosses **621aF**, **621bF**, and **621cF**. As the holder **62F** moves in the second direction, the IC chip **61F** including the electric contact surface **611F** also moves in the second direction, together with the holder **62F**.

The through-hole **451F** has a size (inner dimension) in the first direction greater than a size (outer dimension) of the boss **621aF** in the first direction. The recessed portion **15aF** has a size (inner dimension) in the first direction greater than a size (outer dimension) of the boss **621bF** in the first direction. Further, the recessed portion **15bF** has a size (inner dimension) in the first direction greater than a size (outer dimension) of the boss **621cF** in the first direction. Hence, the holder **62F** can move in the first direction relative to the casing **10F** and the first cover **45F**, together with the boss **621aF**, boss **621bF**, and boss **621cF**. As the holder **62F** moves in the first direction, the IC chip **61F** including the electric contact surface **611F** also moves in the first direction, together with the holder **62F**.

As shown in FIG. **34**, the second holder member **72F** includes a recess portion **625F**. On the other hand, the drum cartridge **80F** includes a convex portion **83F**. The recess portion **625F** and the convex portion **83F** face each other in the first direction. The size of the recess portion **625F** gradually enlarges while progressing away from the IC chip **61F** in the first direction. The size of the convex portion **83F** gradually diminishes while progressing toward a top of the convex portion **83F** in the first direction.

As shown in FIG. **34**, the image forming apparatus **100F** includes an electric connector **102F**. When the drum cartridge **80F** is inserted into the image forming apparatus **100F** in a state where the developing cartridge **1F** is attached to the drum cartridge **80F**, the first holder member **71F** is brought into contact with a component of the image forming apparatus **100F**. The convex portion **83F** of the drum cartridge **80F** is fitted in the recess portion **625F** of the second holder member **72F**. Therefore, the position of the second holder member **72F** relative to the drum cartridge **80F** is fixed. As a result, the holder **62F** is nipped between the component of the image forming apparatus **100F** and the drum cartridge **80F**, whereby the coil spring **73F** is compressed in the first direction. When the drum cartridge **80F** is further inserted into the image forming apparatus **100F**, the electric contact surfaces **611F** of the IC chip **61F** are brought into contact with the one or more of electric connectors **102F**.

The IC chip **61F** is brought into contact with the electric connector **102F**, while receiving a repulsion force from the coil spring **73F**. The holder **62F** is nipped between the electric connector **102F** and the convex portion **83F**. In this way, the holder **62F** is positioned relative to the image forming apparatus **100F** and the drum cartridge **80F**.

As shown in FIG. **35**, the second holder member **72F** includes a pawl **714F**. The pawl **714F** protrudes from the second holder member **72F** in a direction that crosses the first direction. In the example of FIG. **35**, the pawl **714F**

25

protrudes in the third direction from the second holder member 72F. The first holder member 71F has an opening 721F. The pawl 714F is inserted through the opening 721F. This prevents the first holder member 71F from being detached from the second holder member 72F.

The casing 10F of the developing cartridge 1F includes a first rib 46F and a second rib 55F. The first rib 46F protrudes from the first outer surface 11F in the third direction. The second rib 55F protrudes from the second outer surface 12F in the third direction. The drum cartridge 80F includes a first lever 84F and a second lever 85F. During the separating operation, the first lever 84F and second lever 85F are operated by a driving force supplied from the image forming apparatus, whereupon the first rib 46F is pushed by the first lever 84F and the second rib 55F is pushed by the second lever 85F. This operation changes the positions of the first rib 46F and second rib 55F. As a result, the casing 10F of the developing cartridge 1F and the developing roller 30F move in the second direction and move away from the photosensitive drum 92.

As described above, also in the developing cartridge 1F, the position of the holder 62F can be changed in the second direction relative to the casing 10F. Accordingly, the position of the casing 10F in the second direction can be changed, while the positions of the electric contact surface 611F relative to the electric connector 102F in the second direction being maintained, that is, the positions of the electric contact surface 611F relative to the electric connector 102F in the second direction being unchanged. Therefore, it is possible to perform the separating operation, while maintaining the electric contact surface 611F and electric connector 102F in contact with each other. Accordingly, abrasion or wear of the electric contact surface 611F can be suppressed.

Also in the developing cartridge 1F, the electric contact surfaces 611F are movable relative to the casing 10F in the first direction. Accordingly, when the drum cartridge 80F is attached to the image forming apparatus 100F, abrasion or wear of the electric contact surface 611F can be suppressed.

5-7. Other Modifications

In the above-described embodiments, the IC chip including the electric contact surfaces is fixed to the outer surface of the holder. However, only the electric contact surfaces of the IC chip that serve to contact the electric connectors may be fixed to the outer surface of the holder, but portions of the IC chip other than the electric contact surfaces may be positioned at other portions of the developing cartridge.

According to the above-described embodiments, the plural gears provided within each of the first gear portion and the second gear portion are engaged with one another through meshing engagement of the gear teeth. However, the plural gears provided within each of the first gear portion and the second gear portion may be engaged with one another through a frictional force. For example, instead of the plural gear teeth, frictional members, such as rubber members, may be provided to the outer circumferences of two gears that engage with each other.

According to the above-described embodiments, the developing cartridge can be attached to the drawer unit of the image forming apparatus. However, the developing cartridge may be attached to the image forming apparatus which does not include the drawer unit.

Shapes of the details in the developing cartridge may differ from those shown in the drawings attached to this application. The respective components employed in the above-described embodiment and modifications can be

26

selectively combined together within an appropriate range so that no inconsistency will arise.

What is claimed is:

1. A developing cartridge comprising:

a casing configured to accommodate developer therein;
a storage medium including an electric contact surface;
an elastic member extending in a first direction, the first direction being a direction in which the elastic member is configured to be compressed or stretched between a first state and a second state, the first direction further being a direction which crosses both the elastic member and the electric contact surface; and

a holder including an outer surface being positioned toward a side of the holder in the first direction, the electric contact surface being positioned at the outer surface, the electric contact surface being movable between a first position and a second position in the first direction relative to the casing,

wherein the holder includes a first end portion including the outer surface and a second end portion being separated from the first end portion in the first direction, wherein the elastic member is positioned between the first end portion and the second end portion in the first direction and a length of the elastic member in the first direction is greater in the first state than in the second state,

wherein the electric contact surface is in the first position in a state where the elastic member is in the first state, and

wherein the electric contact surface is in the second position in a state where the elastic member is in the second state.

2. The developing cartridge according to claim 1, wherein the elastic member is compressed from the first state to the second state.

3. The developing cartridge according to claim 2, wherein the elastic member is compressed from the first state to the second state according to an external force.

4. The developing cartridge according to claim 3, wherein the elastic member is compressed from the first state to the second state in a case where the electric contact surface moves from the first position to the second position.

5. The developing cartridge according to claim 2, wherein the length of the elastic member in the first direction in the first state is shorter than a natural length of the elastic member.

6. The developing cartridge according to claim 1, wherein the first end portion is connected to one end portion of the elastic member in the first direction, wherein the second end portion is connected to another end portion of the elastic member in the first direction, wherein a second distance between the first end portion and the second end portion in the second state is smaller than a first distance between the first end portion and the second end portion in the first state, and

wherein the elastic member is compressed in the first direction in a case where a state of the elastic member is changed from the first state to the second state.

7. The developing cartridge according to claim 6, wherein the elastic member is compressed in the first direction in a case where a state of the elastic member is changed from the first state to the second state according to an external force.

27

8. The developing cartridge according to claim 6,
wherein the elastic member is stretched in the first direc-
tion in a case where a state of the elastic member is
changed from the second state to the first state.
9. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the electric contact surface is movable relative to
the casing to any one of the first position, the second
position and a third position in the first direction,
wherein the elastic member is configured to be com-
pressed or stretched in the first direction to be in any
one of the first state, the second state and a third state,
wherein the length of the elastic member in the first
direction is greater in the third state than in the second
state, and
wherein the electric contact surface is in the third position
in a state where the elastic member is in the third state.
10. The developing cartridge according to claim 9,
wherein the elastic member is compressed from the first
state to the second state in a case where the electric
contact surface moves from the first position to the
second position, and
wherein the elastic member is stretched from the second
state to the third state in a case where the electric
contact surface moves from the second position to the
third position.
11. The developing cartridge according to claim 10,
wherein the length of the elastic member in the first
direction in the third state is shorter than a natural
length of the elastic member, and
wherein the electric contact surface contacts an electric
connector of an image forming apparatus in a state
where the elastic member is in the third state.

28

12. The developing cartridge according to claim 1, further
comprising:
a developing roller rotatable about an axis extending in a
third direction which is different from the first direc-
tion.
13. The developing cartridge according to claim 12,
wherein the developing roller is positioned at one side of
the casing in a second direction different from the first
direction.
14. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the first direction is perpendicular to the electric
contact surface.
15. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the holder is movable with the storage medium.
16. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the holder holds the electric contact surface at the
outer surface.
17. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the storage medium is positioned at the outer
surface of the holder.
18. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the holder holds the storage medium at the
electric contact surface.
19. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the holder is positioned at a side of the casing.
20. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the elastic member is a spring.
21. The developing cartridge according to claim 1,
wherein the first end portion is movable relative to the
second end portion in the first direction.

* * * * *